The Best of the
Volume 3
JOURNAL
of the Travellers' Aid Society
335
Selected Articles
from Journals 9-12

The Best of the JOURNAL® of the Travellers' Aid Society

Volume 3

Amber Zone

Thunder on Zyra, by Roger Moore.....21
Coup D'etat, by Loren Wiseman.....23
Soft Bunk, by Loren Wiseman.....44
Geria Transfer, by John M. Ford.....46

Contact!

Virushi, by Loren Wiseman and William H. Keith, Jr.....8
Newts, by Loren Wiseman and WIlliam H. Keith, Jr.....14

Feature Articles

Medical Treatment in Traveller, by Terry McInnes and Marc Desmond.....2
The Care and Feeding of NPCs, by J. Andrew Keith.....17
A Referee's Guide to Planetbuilding, by J. Andrew Keith.....25
Archaic Missile Weapons, by Frank Chadwick.....42

Features

Bestiary: Ragfish & Bloodvarks.....6
Bestiary: Tree Rat.....12
Bestiary: Kian.....38
Casual Encounter: Dev Landrel.....36
Casual Encounter: Glorinna Firella.....39

Dates in these issues of the *Journal* are given in accordance with an arbitrary Imperial calendar of 365 days. The expression of date consists of a three-digit day number (showing the current day of the year) followed by a dash and a four-digit year number (showing the current year since the founding of the Imperium).

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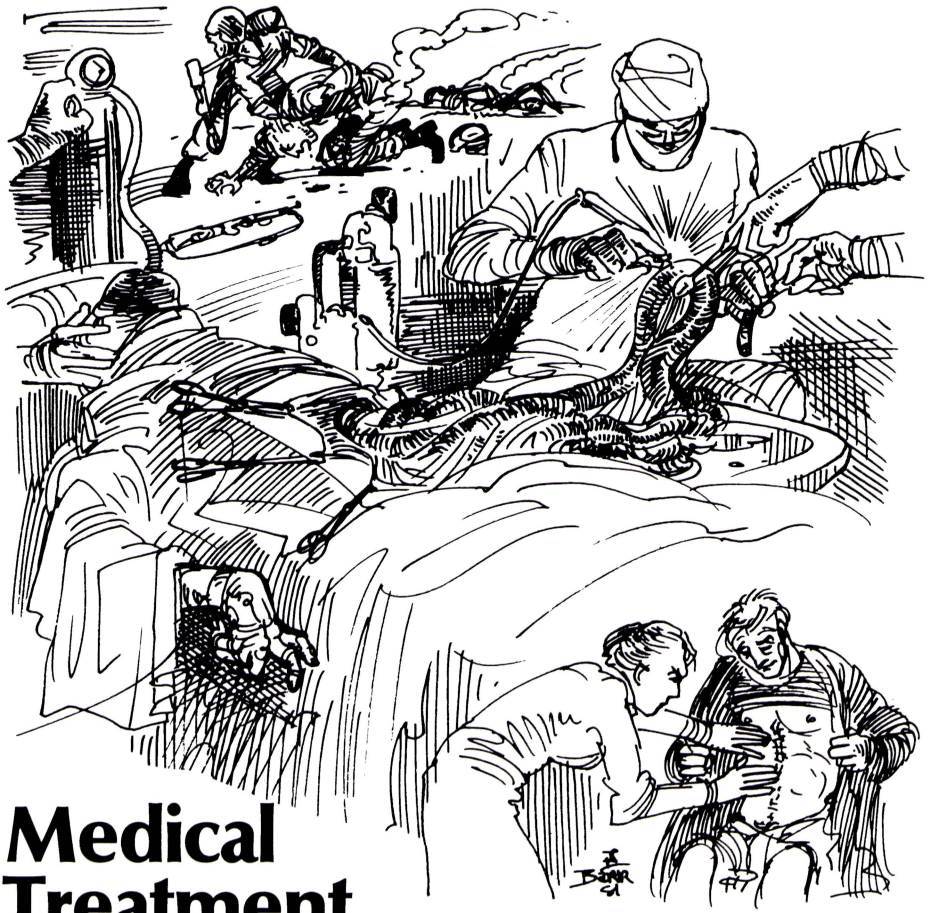


Medical Treatment in *TRAVELLER*

Adventuring in the universe of the far distant future is a dangerous business. Characters die and wounds are often suffered.

While certain drugs and their effects on wounds have already been described in Book 2, and some thought to the effects of wounds on characters has been given in the personal combat system of Book 2, these are relatively simple systems designed for speed of play. Referees and players who wish to have a more sophisticated system of dealing with wounds — one that brings the various levels of medical skill into use — may use these rules as an alternative to the wound and healing rules presented in Book 1.

WOUNDS

Characters are most likely to suffer injury from wounds acquired in combat or from trauma caused by such events as falls. These injuries may consist of gunshot wounds, slash, cut, stab and puncture wounds, multiple fragment wounds, concussion, and burns from fire or energy weapons. In many cases (signalled by the reduction of at least one characteristic to zero) the character will need prompt medical attention to function again, or even to survive.

There are three basic wound or trauma categories — light, moderate, and severe. Light wounds include those that do not reduce any physical characteristic to zero. Moderate wounds are those which reduce one characteristic to zero from shock, resulting in temporary unconciousness for about ten minutes. Severe wounds are those which reduce two characteristics to zero and possibly effect the remaining physical characteristic, resulting in severe shock, and coma from loss of blood, and injury.

It should be noted here that wounds which do not receive prompt medical attention may become more serious or kill the victim with the passage of time. Because of infection, blood loss, or other progressive deterioration of a patient's condition, light wounds may become moderate wounds. These in turn may become severe wounds, and untreated severe wounds may eventually kill a patient.

ADDITIONAL WOUND EFFECTS

If a light or moderately wounded character does not receive medical treatment from a medic-1 within 1D x 10 minutes, there is a possibility the character's wound will become more severe. Roll 2D for 7+ for the character's condition to deteriorate an additional 1D wound points. If, on this roll, 12 is rolled exactly, a catastrophic trauma has occurred, and the character dies immediately. This reflects the fact that trauma patients may sometimes seem okay, but suddenly die when a critical blood vessel ruptures or some other hidden damage takes full effect. Repeat the deterioration and additional wound roll once for each hour after the first deterioration roll until the character receives medical care or dies.

If a severely wounded character does not receive first aid within 1D minutes, the wounded character will die. If first aid is received, but no further medical attention is received within the next hour, the severely wounded character's condition will automatically begin deteriorating at a rate of 1D wound points per hour until major medical treatment is received or the character dies.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

The treatment of most wounded characters is primarily surgical in nature, supported by drug therapy and nursing care. However, some types of wounds, such as laser and other energy weapon burns can only be healed with drug therapy and rest. The skill levels of medical personnel, the local tech level, and the quality of local medical facilities all have an effect on how well the wounded character recovers from his or her wounds. Even the dexterity of the attending surgeon has a bearing on the success of the treatment. Price is also a consideration.

Therefore, a wealthy character wounded in a robbery attempt near a major medical facility on a tech 15 world will stand a much greater chance of a full recovery than a mercenary private wounded in combat on a tech 5 world with only a field medic in attendance.

In order to fully recover from moderate wounds, a character must be attended by a doctor (medic-3). Severely wounded characters require a surgeon (dexterity 8+ and medic−3+) for treatment. Light wounds can be treated by a medic−2 nurse of medical technician (these wounds are assumed to be superficial, and require only stitching and/or bandaging).

Doctors in surgery must be assisted by at least one surgical technician (medic−2+) and at least one anesthetist.

Surgery is required with all moderate and severe gunshot, fragment, blade, and puncture wounds. In the case of the

former two, slugs and fragments must be removed. In all cases, tissue damage must be repaired. Wounds from energy weapons will often require extensive surgery because their great heat will usually cause a steam explosion from the water in the tissues, and considerable damage to adjacent tissues from radiated heat.

Because recovery from surgery is by no means certain, a wounded character undergoing an operation must throw a surgical survival and recovery roll. The patient must throw 2D for 6+ for a normal recovery. A 2 means death on the table, and a 3, 4, or 5 means an impaired recovery. As outlined on the table below, the tech level of surgical facilities and the surgeon's training affect the outcome, as do the surgeon's medical skill and dexterity level.

Surgery survival roll DMs: +2 if TL14+ world; +1 if TL12+ world; −1 if TL6 world, −2 if TL5 world; −6 if TL5-world; +1 if surgeon's dext 8+; +2 if surgeon's dext 10+; +1 for each medic skill level higher than 3; +1 if anesthetist is medic 3+; +1 if surgical technician is medic 3+.

HEALING

A wounded character will be restored to full physical capacity if he or she passes the modified surgical survival roll with a roll of 6+ and if he or she receives proper post operative care. This involves spending time recovering from surgery in a hospital and an additional period of reduced activity in convalescence. A character who has suffered moderate wounds can expect to spend 2D days in hospital while a character who was severely wounded must spend 1D x 10 days in hospital, the patient's physical characteristics will be halfway between their full value and their wounded value.

Moderately wounded characters may leave the hospital in half the above rolled time provided they remain bed patients in the care of a medic-1 nurse for the balance of their recovery period (this is often done to save money. See below).

After leaving the hospital or completing the initial recovery period, the wounded character will regain his or her physical characteristics (beginning at the half-way level mentioned above) at a rate of one point per week for each of the three characteristics. Lightly wounded characters do not require hospitalization, merely convalescence, and recover at the rate described.

Characters who have an impaired recovery because of a low surgical survival and recovery throw will suffer 2D points of permanent physical damage. These permanent damage points may be distributed in any manner among the three characteristics. However, if any one characteristic is reduced to zero, the character will remain in a permanent coma.

DEATH

When all three of a character's attributes are reduced to zero, death normally results. Death, however, is not instantaneous, and a character with medical-2+ will be able to preserve the character in suspended animation for later treatment, providing that suitable hospital facilities (tech level 9+) or a low berth or equivalent is available. Fast drug alone will not be enough, as the patient will need extensive life supports during this period. His attributes will remain at zero, and he will be vulnerable to any influence that interferes with his life supports, such as a severe jolt or the depletion of needed supplies.

If the dead character is tended by a surgeon or other specialist (medic-4+), he may be sustained in this condition indefinitely or until his life supports are threatened. Otherwise, he can only be held in suspended animation for 2-12

months. To have a chance at reanimation, he must be delivered within that time to a hospital on a world with a tech level of 13+. There is a base chance of recovery, which is accomplished on a roll of 11+ with a DM of 1+ for every tech level over 13. If the roll is missed, the character dies. If the roll is made, the character recovers to a comatose state with one point in each physical attribute. Subsequent treatment will restore one point per week on a roll of 2D for 9+, DM +1 per tech level over 12. The player must decide before each week's roll which attribute is to be restored that week; if the character misses a week's recovery roll, the chosen attribute is reduced permanently by one point. This sort of treatment is not only rare, but expensive (see Costs, below). A patient may be restored to life on an advanced planet and then removed to some other location for further recovery provided that a character with medical-4+ is in atendance; if this is done, he may resume limited activity as soon as all of his characteristics have been restored to four or their normal value, whichever is less. This may include performance of ordinary professions such as navigation or admin, but not to more demanding ones such as pilot or hunting. The referee should impose on a character recovering from near-death the rule that fighting may only be done in self-defense until the patient is nearly or completely recovered.

The above treatment may not be applied in cases where the brain has been destroyed, severely damaged, or severed from the body, or in other cases of major trauma such as a crushed torso, etc. In addition, the referee may designate certain conditions or diseases as incurable if desired.

COSTS

Unless they are members of a mercenary organization that provides medical care free of charge, or have made other arrangements, such as insurance, adventurers will find that medical care is expensive.

An ordinary visit to a physician costs Cr20, while out-patient treatment of a light wound will cost Cr10 x 2D. A moderately wounded adventurer will pay Cr500 x 1D for surgical treatment, while a severely wounded adventurer will pay 2D x Cr1000 for surgery.

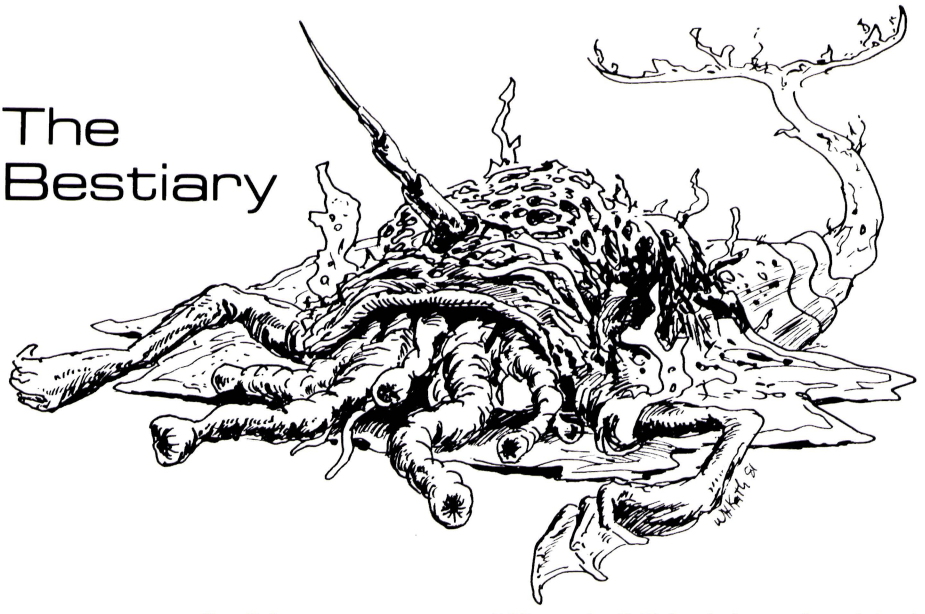
A patient being revived from near death (all three characteristics reduced to zero) costs a minimum of Cr250,000 per day, plus Cr500 per day of recovery time (the referee may add additional charges as he or she sees fit).

Hospital care will cost Cr500 per day during the first 1D-3 days after surgery, and Cr100 per day after that. Moderately wounded characters can hire Medic-2 home care nurses at Cr50 per day.

Physicians in private practice receive 50% of the surgical fee with the balance going to the hospital and to the assistants. Doctors receive all of the office call and minor surgery fees.

— *Terry McInnes and Marc Desmond*

The Bestiary



Ragfish

(Trineroprosopon enteronophagus)

Sometimes known as the bletch, this handsome piscine creature is native to several freshwater bodies on Onicrom. Most humans find them unusually, disgustingly ugly in appearance and repulsive in their habits. Though quite rare, they have become popular as novelties with wealthy aquariasts, and have been known to sell for as much as Cr15,000.

They are also known for their lethal poison, which is injected into their prey through a telescoping hollow anterior spine. In their natural habitat, small fish are attracted to feed on ragged strips of mucus-covered skin which float from the ragfish's body (and from which the name is derived). These small fish attract larger animals, which fall prey to the creature's poison spine. While the prey is still dying, the ragfish disgorges a number of intestinal tubes with sucker heads, which attach to the prey, secrete digestive juices, and injest liquid and semi-liquid tissue.

Besides being much sought-after by fish collectors, they have been used occasionally as assassin's weapons.

The fish will attempt to inject anything that disturbs it. Crime boss Joseph "Slimey Joe" Siskovitch was found dead in a Regina hotel penthouse in 1106, victim of a ragfish hidden beneath the bubbles of his whirlpool bath. Ragfish can survive for long periods under adverse conditions, even in chlorinated swimming pools and the like. The animal's mantle will keep it moist and alive for as much as eight hours out of water.

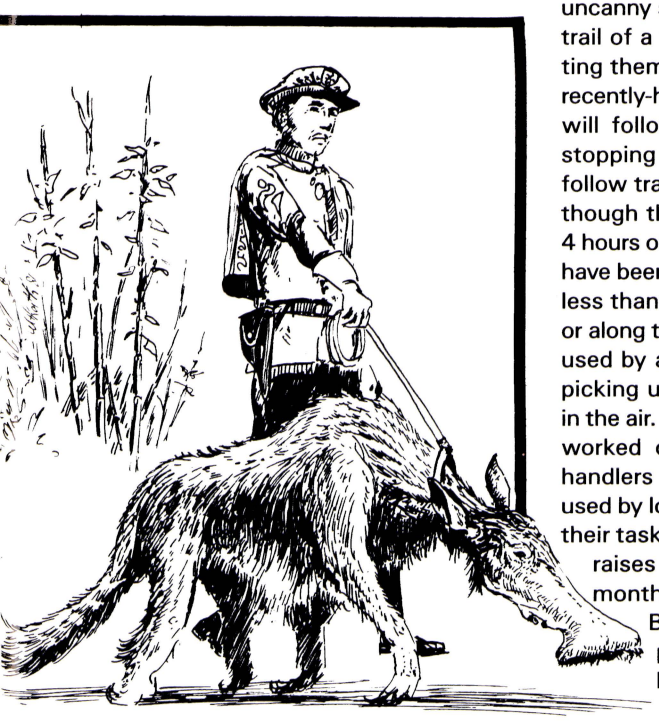
The ragfish averages 40 cm in length and masses about .5 kg. The anterior spine, which is less than 10 cm long when collapsed, snaps out to 25 cm when triggered by nearby motion or physical contact. The venom inflicts 4d of damage immediately. A human stung by a ragfish and not killed outright will take 12 endurance-weeks (i.e. a character with an endurance of 6 would take two weeks, one with an endurance of 12 would take one week, etc.) to recover completely.

Antivenom is not commonly available because of the animal's rarity, but a single dose can be prepared from the body of a ragfish (or, more properly, from the poison glands, but in any case, the fish must be killed) by a hospital or medical research lab on any world of tech level 5 or higher. Use of the antivenom will shorten the victim's recovery time by half. Any collector wealthy

enough to afford to keep ragfish will undoubtedly keep a frozen supply of the antivenom on hand.

Ragfish are most commonly found in pet stores catering to wealthy or exotic pet-owning clients. They are occasionally encountered as special cargo on board freighters or starliners, sealed in transport aquaria. They are easy to care for, and eat anything longer than 2 cm as long as it is alive. They will not eat dead meat.

Little is known of the ragfish's reproductive habits or life-cycle. It is known that they are egg-layers and bisexual, but paired ragfish in captivity kill one another more often than not, and breeding is difficult. Commercial pet houses increase their stocks by artificial insemination, but this is difficult (and dangerous) which accounts, in part, for the animal's high cost.



Bloodvark

(Megalorhinos osmichnilatis claudii)

Bloodvarks — also called walking noses and Hoovers, for reasons unknown, are four-limbed mammal-like creatures native to Lantoli. They have been introduced as trade items to worlds throughout the Imperium; they are often purchased by the law enforcement agencies of planets of tech level 5 through 9.

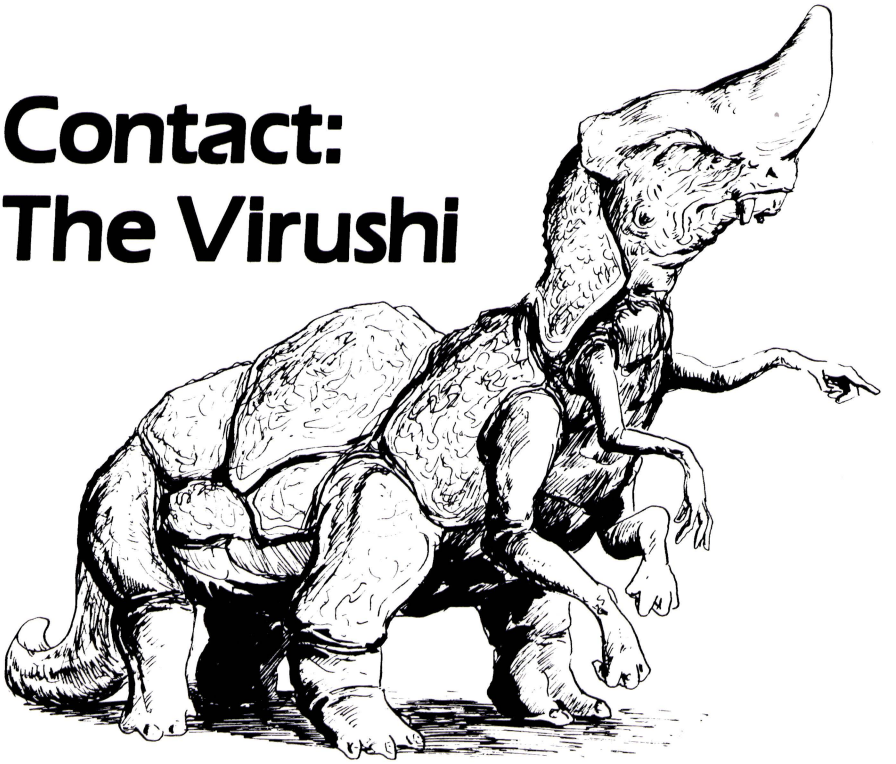
These strong, hairy animals mass between 50 and 70 kg when full grown, stand .8 meter high at the shoulder and average 2.3 meters long, including the bushy tail. They are omnivores, preferring small, burrowing animals or hive insects, which they dig up with their foreclaws, but can subsist on berries and sweet grasses. This adaptability has let them adjust to and thrive on a number of planets and a variety of climates.

Bloodvarks are best known for their uncanny sense of smell. Once put on the trail of a fugitive or animal prey (by letting them smell an article of clothing or recently-handled item, for instance), they will follow it relentlessly and without stopping for days at a time. They can follow trails a week old in good weather, though they will lose a trail after about 4 hours of steady hard rain or snow. They have been known to follow fresh trails — less than 6 hours old — across streams or along the ground UNDER the branches used by an escaping prisoner, probably picking up traces of scent still hanging in the air. They do not tire easily; they are worked on leashes day and night by handlers working in relays. The animals used by local police forces are trained for their tasks, usually by the agency which raises them, a process which takes 3 months.

Bloodvarks have extremely poor eyesight, and only fair hearing. Normally gentle, they attack if wounded, cornered

continued on page 24

Contact: The Virushi



With a length of nearly three meters, standing close to 1.8 meters at the shoulder, and massing close to 1000 kilos, the Virushi are among the largest intelligent races known to the Imperium. Virshash is a size A, dense atmosphere world just within the borders of Imperial space within the Reaver's Deep sector; atmospheric density not withstanding, the planet is heavily irradiated by the more distant of the world's two suns. These factors of high gravity, dense atmosphere, and heavy radiation have shaped the Virushi, guiding their evolution into the awesome form of today.

The Virushi are squat, massively built creatures, covered by overlapping plates of leathery armor. They walk — and can run with surprising speed — on four tree-thick legs, and are capable of extraordinarily delicate manipulation with two sets of arms. The lower arm pair are heavily muscled and extremely powerful; the upper pair seem withered by comparison, but are amazingly dextrous. The semi-erect posture has led some humans to call the Virushi "centaurs with tank blood", or "intelligent bulldozers". They are immensely strong, but this strength must be set against generally poor sensory equipment. Their eyes, nearly buried beneath massive brow ridges, work well in brilliant sunlight, but are not at all good for seeing in poor lighting conditions; they are almost useless in darkness. Their ears are evolved for hearing sounds transmitted in the dense atmosphere of their homeworld, and thus find normal sounds in a standard atmosphere near the threshold of hearing.

SOCIETY

As the Virushi progressed towards civilization, an unusual social unit called the "cooperative" by sophontologists came into being. Individual Virushi had to eat a great deal, and range over a wide area, to feed their massive bodies. The

tendency, then, was towards a highly individualistic, even solitary existence. However, those individuals who cooperated in building shelters, tools, fire, and, of course, families, had a better chance for survival. The resultant culture today is semi-feudal. Obligation and duty are complex and interwoven; the individual's love of freedom is carefully balanced against a feeling of responsibility towards others. The concept of coercive government is inconceivable — and incomprehensible — to these people. They give freely of their own abilities and services, and expect a minimum of outside interference in their lives. A Virush will work in voluntary cooperation with others, but cannot be ordered to do something he doesn't want to do.

Though they appear frightening to humans, the Virushi are a gentle race — largely because they are of such size and strength. As one of the larger lifeforms on their homeworld, they were never forced to aggressively dominate their environment. Cultural units never evolved past the cooperative stage. Organized states, large governments, and organized warfare never came into being. A lack of drive has tended to keep the Virushi from becoming anything more than what they have always been, a contented, pastoral, almost utopian culture. Many individuals, however, do possess a certain urge to leave their homes, see the universe, and try to serve others as they have always served their own cooperatives.

Virushi found off their homeworld are most likely to be engaged in a career which stresses service to others; others are often found in work which caters to their highly individualistic way of life. Their great dexterity makes them excellent doctors — a Virushi surgeon was recently elevated to the emperor's personal medical staff. An extreme dedication and a fervor to help others characterizes such Virushi enountered in jobs of this kind.

Because they will not take orders, Virushi do not join the military, even though their great size would make them fearsome fighters. Many an Imperial drill sergeant has been heard bemoaning the fact that such perfect fighting machines are also pacifists who don't even understand the concept of war. In their chosen fields, however, the Virushi have distinguished themselves on many occasions.

REFEREEING THE VIRUSHI

Virushi characters can be interesting both as NPCs and (for the daring) as player characters. In creating and using such characters, certain modifications are required to reflect the unusual features of the race.

Characteristics: Strength and endurance are each determined by rolling 1D+10. These characteristics can be improved by later modifications during the character's career to as much as 20.

Dexterity is found by rolling 2D+2.

Social level is found by rolling 2D-2. Virushi social level does not improve as a result of service; such increases are applied to education instead. The Virushi do not care about the intricacies of society, and do not fit in well — thus the comparative lack of value to their social level.

Careers: When using basic **Traveller** rules, enlistment in the Navy, Army, and Marines is prohibited because of the refusal to take orders. Scouts appeal to the Virushi sense of individualism, and Scout service enlistment earns a DM+1. In Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium,* the same favorable DM is applied to careers such as doctor, belter, scientist, and any other career in which service to others and/or extreme independence are stressed.

Virushi characters going through the

expanded character generation system presented for merchant characters (elsewhere in this issue) receive a DM+1 when applying to free traders, and a DM−1 in joining either of the other merchant services.

Skills: Virushi begin with no knowledge of gun or blade weapons. The first skill earned in either category gives them a skill-0, allowing use of the weapon, but no real expertise. Subsequent additions are treated normally.

Combat: If a Virushi character is forced to fight, he may make use of a number of different natural weapons. The tail is treated as club+1. The lower arm pair may be used as unmodified clubs. Feet are treated as hooves+1. The thick armored hide of the Virushi is treated as cloth armor, and those characters who are wearing armor receive modifiers twice. In combat, a Virush may make two attacks with natural weapons each round, rather than one; each attack must be with a different body part, and cannot be made in conjunction with any attacks using artificial weapons. For basic **Traveller** combat, Virushi may move at a speed of three, but only for a number of rounds equalling their endurance.

When using *Snapshot* or *Azhanti High Lightning* rules, Virushi take up two squares at a time. Double-sized counters — available from a variety of boardgames, or homemade — may be used to represent this. Only one Virush may occupy a given two-square area, but two human-sized beings can also be stacked on each square also occupied by a Virush. A human can ride on the back of a Virush, providing, of course, that he is permitted to do so. In *Striker* situations, Virushi characters are mounted individually, in the rare instance when one appears at all.

Equipment: Although their hands are close to human in shape and articulation, Virushi prefer equipment tailored for them, mostly because gear built for humans tends to break easily. Vacc suits and the like will cost twice the normal amount, regular equipment 1.5 as much. Virushi characters handling an item of human equipment or a human weapon in combat situations or periods of great stress will break it accidentally on a roll of 9+.

Virushi require a great deal of space to hold their massive bulk. When carrying Virushi characters in starships, or otherwise providing accommodations, tonnage requirements are twice those for humans. Thus comfortable staterooms must have a capacity of 8 tons, while cramped or military facilities are the normal 4 ton cabins used by humans. Virushi will endure discomfort stoically, but it is wisest to provide staterooms of sufficient size to avoid severe damage to the room's interior by accidental flicks of the tail or other unavoidable problems. A partition can be removed between two cabins, and heavy-duty Virushi furnishings installed, for Cr5,000 (including the cost of returning the room to its original condition after the voyage is over). Virushi passengers will cheerfully pay the extra amount of a ticket to have such modifications made.

Environment: Accustomed to dense atmospheres, Virushi treat a standard atmosphere as thin and a thin atmosphere as very thin. They tend to make jokes about their vacuum-breathing friends, while humans in Virushi-conditioned rooms often complain of drowning in the thick soup the Virushi like to breathe.

PLAYING THE VIRUSHI

Players who want to take on the challenge of playing a Virushi character should always attempt to conform to the unique aspects of Virushi psychology. Virushi are gentle, compassionate, and do not indulge in aggressive speech or behavior. Extremely polite and soft-

spoken at all times, the Virushi voice is naturally rather quiet and weak; this is due to differences in atmospheric pressure between their own world and those of humans. Thus an attitude of calm, quiet, unassuming behavior is urged on any player running a Virushi character.

Virushi will fight, particularly when the lives of friends or charges are threatened. They do not, however, seek out conflict. They rarely carry weapons, and prefer negotiation to combat. Placid in the face of threats, largely indifferent to pain, the Virushi never become angry. They will tend to be concerned, even apologetic, if forced to cause damage or pain.

Virushi will not give orders, though they may make suggestions and offer advice in a diffident fashion (which sometimes inspires a quick obedience from those around who feel that the awesome body, rather than the gentle mind, should be obeyed in every whim!). Equally, they do not take orders, though they may be persuaded to do something for the common good. Virushi expect this same behavior from others, but are more amused than troubled by the alien (to them) lack of harmony and cooperation. Attempted coercion and threats do not move or anger them. At first, Virushi will be amused by, and then ignore such advances. Reason and negotiation will be attempted for as long as possible, but finally, if all else fails, they will humbly and apologetically deal violently with their antagonist.

The referee should not use the normal reaction table rules in dealing with Virushi. Virushi characters should use the sequence above; if rolls should be necessary, however, hostility results should be treated simply as non-cooperation. If such results continue to turn up under persistent pressure, the reaction should slowly be altered to the point where violence becomes the only alternative.

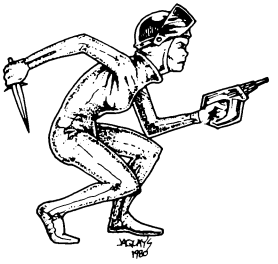
On the other hand, non-Virushi characters who are faced with a Virush will tend towards enthusiastic cooperaion with anything the being urges, particularly if they are not familiar with the race. Even those who know the gentle nature of these beings will find the fearsome appearance very, very, persuasive.

Limitations on Virushi senses should be kept in mind at all times. A Virushi character or party suffers a DM−3 on rolls for surprise (this is not true, however, in dense atmosphere situations, where Virushi hearing is excellent). Players and referee alike should note that soft sounds are inaudible to Virushi characters, and peripheral vision limited. Responding to anything behind them requires a ponderous turn, making them slow to respond to threats from their rear.

Psionic powers are not uncommon among the Virushi, but like all other Imperial citizens, their development and use are suppressed.

Their philosophy of non-violence colors everything the Virushi do. They may spend hours trying to persuade their non-Virushi comrades of the benefits of peaceful negotiation, reason, and discussion. Players and referees are encouraged to pursue other lines of behavior and thought that may be suggested by these basic guidelines.

— J. Andrew Keith & William H. Keith, jr.



The Bestiary

Tree Rat
(Abdor var.)

The Focaline Tree Rat is a small rodent-like creature native to Focaline (in the Aramis subsector). It weighs 3-4 kilograms, and measures 70-80 cm in length. Two-thirds of its length is tail. Tree rats have a red-brown fur covering the entire body except for the soles of their paws. Some specimens are shaded more to a deep chocolate brown or maroon. Tree rats seem able to adapt very quickly to temperature changes, and exposure to cold weather for more than a week results in their growing a thicker and rougher coat. Though they physically resemble terrestrial rodent types, tree rats have longer legs, feet adapted to grasping, and a prehensile tail that all help them in their arboreal habitats. This tail allows tree rats to easily pick up small objects and hang from tree limbs using their tail alone (most tree rats sleep in this fashion). In the wild, tree rats use their tails to carry food to treetop nests, to retrieve food dropped into areas that cannot otherwise be reached with paws, and in combat, either to free their other limbs for the fight or to grab a small opponent and dislodge it from its perch on a limb. They are omnivores, and have very sharp teeth that they use to pierce thick fruit skins (or unwary fingers!). They are quite intelligent (about the same level as most small Terran monkeys) and have an elaborate social structure in natural environments.

On their homeworlds, tree rats are looked upon with a mixture of dislike and

appreciation. They are prone to raid fruit-bearing plants (their chief food) and are thus not popular with orchard owners and the like, but they also feed upon and control local pests (such as the ubiquitous norway rat) that destroy or spoil other more financially important crops on the planet. Tree rats have proven quite popular pets in many places (especially in places where small animals present a pest problem), as well as on starships as mascots or personal pets. This practice has led to the spread of tree rats throughout most of the spinward reaches of the Imperium.

Focaline tree rats have an extremely well developed olfactory system, and much of their intraspecies communication is based on the detection of emotional states through different smells. When exposed to human company for longer than a year, tree rats can learn to distinguish emotions such as fear or anger in humans by smell. They can easily be trained for certain tasks, such as sniffing out small component microfires or bearing burnouts. Some planetary police forces have trained tree rats to track creatures or persons over limited areas, and sniff out hidden illegal cargoes, but such training takes a year or so, and requires constant reinforcement. As pets, tree rats are quite successful. Their mammal-like physiology allows them to eat most of the foods that humans do. They shed little, except when getting rid of a cold-weather coat and are naturally clean animals, easily housebroken. Tree rats have an average lifespan of fifteen years, mate for life, and bear young once a year after age three, in litters of about four "ratlings". Their major drawback as pets is their insatiable curiosity, which has led to their accidentally being locked in airlocks or food bins. They also like to collect bits of shiny or brightly colored material (like coins, keys, and credit cards), depositing them in a nest in their owner's cabin, a trait which has earned them the nickname "cinnamon thief". This can develop into a game the tree rat initiates by picking up a valuable item in its tail and then racing around the ship with the item's owner(s) in hot pursuit.

— *Roger Moore*

CONTACT!
Newts

Also known as Bwaps or Wabs, (from their name for themselves, Bawapakerwa-a-a-awapawab), the Newts originated on Marhaban, in the Lentuli subsector.

GENERAL

Newts average 1.4 meters in height and weigh between 30 and 50 kilograms. They are upright, bipedal, homeothermic and bi-sexual. The skeleton is internal, and their circulatory system is closed. Their hemoglobin is copper-based, and a deep blue in color. Because of this, their skin shows as a faint greenish-blue in areas where pigmentation is absent. Body markings vary tremendously from clan (''tree'') to clan, each one having a distinctive pattern. The pattern is determined by genetic factors and the color determined by careful manipulation of the mother's diet during the formation of the egg. Greens, browns, yellows and blues are

most common, usually in patterns of darker colors over a lighter basic color.

Because their skin must be constantly moist, Newts are uncomfortable in humidity of less then 98%. With special clothing, they can exist indefinitely in humidities as low as 25%, provided they have adequate water. This clothing normally consists of a loosely fitting kaftan-like garment and a hood covering the head (giving rise to another nickname, ''towel-heads''). The cloth of these garments is permeated with a network of fine tubes, through which water flows and keeps the cloth moist. In occupations where they must handle papers, or other items which would suffer from moisture, Newts wear thin water-proof gloves. In humidities of less than 25%, they must use sealed environment suits. All clothing is colored with a stylized representation of their body coloring, since recognition of body pattern is an important part of their greeting ritual.

Newts are oviparous, each female incubating a single, non-amniotic egg in a special pouch on her lower abdomen. After hatching, the young remain in this pouch for several weeks, occasionally coming out to be fed, until they are strong enough to survive outside. The young reach maturity after 14 years.

HISTORY

Before attaining civilization, the Newts lived in densely wooded, mangrove like swamps, burrowing under and among the root-systems of large trees to form dens for the communal protection of their young. Their culture and ritual interactions began at this time.

A shift in weather patterns on Marhaban caused the marshy areas which formed their home to shrink, forcing them into increased competition with other animals in the region. The discovery of tools, and agriculture permitted the Newts to gain a tremendous advantage over their competition, and put them on the road to civilization. Although the Newts discovered tool use and agriculture early, they did not discover fire until late in their development, because of their environment.

For this reason, the Newts have always lagged behind in metal-working and similar pursuits. When discovered by the Vilani, their tech level had reached 7, and seemed to have stabilized there. Their introduction to advanced technologies such as the jump drive had no major effect on their culture, and the Newts have prospered greatly in the intervening centuries.

Newts can be found throughout the Imperium, but their numbers are greatest in the region trailing and coreward of capital. Fewer than a dozen worlds are completely controlled by Newts, and most of these are inside the Imperium. Newt merchants and administrators can be found throughout known space, although they are less common outside the Imperium.

SOCIETY

The Newt world view (which is not really a religion, but nevertheless dominates every part of their life), holds that each individual has a place in his wapawab or tree — a term stemming from their species' habitat, but including phratry, bloodlines, country, and place of duty. The literal tree is intricately tied into the planetary ecology, sheltering hundreds of species, providing oxygen, converting water and minerals into food, and so on. The figurative tree is much harder to define, but is roughly equivalent to clan or tribal groups in other races. A tree can vary in number from a few individuals to thousands. Both kinds of trees are part of a planet, which is part of a solar system, which is part of a cluster, which is part of a galaxy, which is part of the cosmos. Everything the

Newts do reflects this complex, wheels-within-wheels, patterns-within-patterns outlook. Each individual takes great pride in being one small, functional and unique cog in a vast, ever-living, ever-changing universe of interlinked patterns and cogs. Their ritual of greeting, for instance, seems like meaningless formality and windy chit-chat to non-Newts, but reflects a communication of "I am in this place, and doing my part. Where are you and what are you doing?"

From the human point of view, the Newts are obsessed with minutae, patterns, and the order of things. Driven by this internal desire to see everything in its proper place, the Newts make excellent bureaucrats, officials, mathematicians, bookkeepers, scientists, and historians.

Their obsession with ritual and proper conduct often makes them difficult to deal with. Those who violate the ritual will be lectured on the proprieties of the situation, often at great length. Dealing with Newts takes time, but trying to speed things up only aggravates things, and takes more time.

Criminal behavior is extremely rare, and is considered the worst form of mental disorder among the Newts, since it is disruptive of the proper order of things. Their definition of crime, however, can sometimes be at variance with Imperial norms. The elimination of a greatly disruptive influence is considered good, even if it involves the death of an intelligent being to restore the proper order of things. Fortunately, most Newt courts of law consider exile to be sufficient, especially in the case of humans.

GOVERNMENT

The few worlds which are completely Newt controlled are classed as a religious dictatorship. Law levels are usually very restrictive, representing the obsession of the Newts with proper behavior.

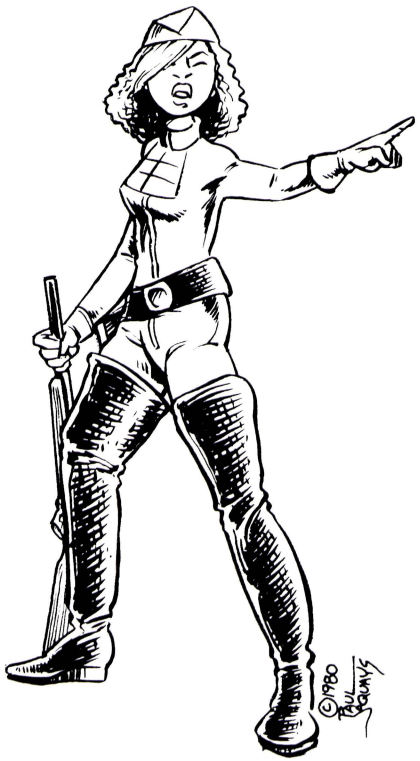
REFEREEING NEWTS

As NPCs, Newts can be an interesting and valuable addition to a campaign. Few players will find Newts desirable as player-characters, however.

Character Generation: Newts in the Imperium can be generated in the normal manner, with the following exceptions. Strength and endurance are determined with a throw of 2D-4 rather than the normal 2D. Enlistment DMs, in addition to all others which may be applicable are −3 for marines, −1 for the army, +1 for the scouts and other and +2 for the merchants. The first level of admin skill received counts as two (i.e. a Newt with admin cannot have admin-1), each subsequent level received counting normally. Newts may not receive gambling, forgery, or streetwise (roll again if one of these skills occurs). Newts receive a −1 DM when attempting to use tools or weapons not specially constructed to fit their hands (likewise, other races receive the same DM when using Newt tools or weapons). Newts receive normal mustering out benefits (any weapon received is suited to their hands).

Newts may eat human food and live under human life-support without dif-

continued on page 48



The Care and Feeding of NPCs

The key to maximum enjoyment of **Traveller** is the same as that to any other role-playing game: the interaction between players and the referee. This interaction can take place on many levels, but there is one major point of tangency, an important bridge between the two, that should never be overlooked. This bridge, the means by which much of the game or campaign can be regulated, is formed by the referee's use of non-player characters.

The NPC is interesting to have around. He/she/it can act as a patron directing the players on an adventure, as a source of information, gossip, or rumors, as a stumbling block on the road to success, or as a source of relief (comic relief even) when the campaign becomes dull. To the referee, the NPC serves as an extension into the characters' environment, acting as eyes, ears, body, and mouth. It is far more creative to subtly steer a group using the actions, inactions, or advice of a handy NPC rather than handling everything by way of divine announcements from on high or direct hints and suggestions. Coming from an NPC, the same kind of advice can be handed out more sparingly, and has a greater chance of misdirecting characters into an interesting situation.

Supplement 1, *1001 Characters,* and Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium,* are major sources from which **Traveller** NPCs may be built. The The other major source, of course, is recourse to a set of dice and Book 1. The latter method is time consuming, and tends to give the referee less control over the nature of the NPC. It is certainly not to be advised if more than one or two referee-controlled characters are going to be used.

Regardless of where you get your NPC, though, bear in mind that there is more to an NPC than just statistics and skills. Like a player coming up with a well rounded character, the referee should

take time to think out ways that the NPC can become an individual, rather than just another string of letters, numbers and words.

Human beings (and alien intelligences, too) all have some kind of motivation, some kind of purpose behind their actions. It is not really enough to say that a particular NPC is going to act as the villain in this adventure; the referee should know why the NPC is doing whatever is being done. The NPC will have specific goals and motivations, and these won't always mesh with those of the player characters even when the NPC is friendly to them. This can lead to a lot of additional excitement and a number of additional opportunities for adventure for everyone concerned.

The referee should prepare NPCs carefully, making note of some of these special points. Once the character of the NPC is complete, the referee should be willing and able to play **Traveller** using the NPC, right alongside of the actual players, treating the NPC as a regular person in terms of reactions, attitudes, and characterization. The referee's NPC thus becomes an actual part of the game, instead of an outsider along for the ride, and the excitement and realism of the situation is much enhanced.

The referee has one advantage in the creation of the NPC that will help a great deal in making the character work in the adventure. Knowing in advance the general nature of the adventure, it is possible for the referee to fudge a little in order to produce the best possible character for a situation. Rolling up a character doesn't have to be all random. A little cheating on the die rolls is allowable for an NPC. Survival, promotion, and particularly the specific skills that are acquired should all be geared towards making the NPC become what you need for the adventure. In the same way, don't feel constricted by the characters you draw from the two supplements. Choose one who generally fits your needs; match a specific set of statistics or certain skills you know will be useful, or whatever. But feel free to take off at a tangent from the starting point, swapping around possible skills as you wish. Try not to give the character any skills that could not have been earned in the service through which he or she was trained, unless you can justify the skill in some other way or want the players to pick up on this out-of-place skill in order to recognize an imposter. Otherwise, anything goes. Substitute skills from Book 4, *Mercenary,* or Book 5, *High Guard;* add more to this skill while taking away from that one; even add skills if the character did not earn as many as might have been possible. Characters from the supplements should never be treated as static, fixed entities; they are as adaptable as you wish them to be, allowing an infinite number of combinations out of the basic source material.

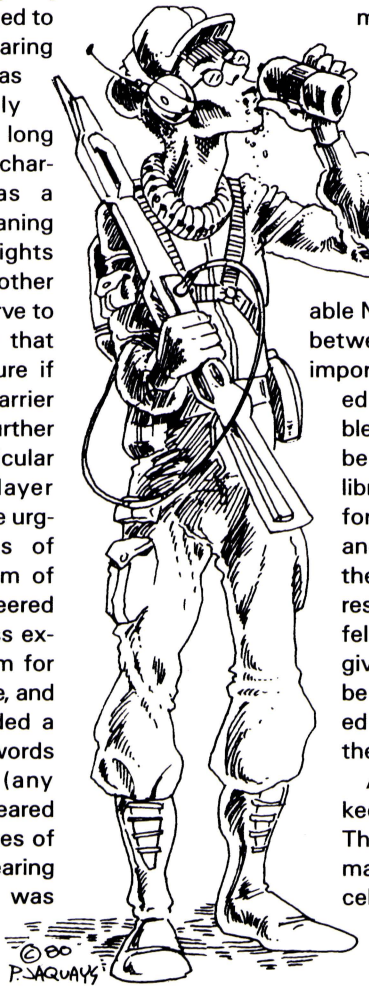
How can NPCs be used to enliven the **Traveller** scenario or campaign? Let's take a look at some examples of ways in which the NPC can be a useful addition to the referee's bag of tricks.

First, we must distinguish between the varieties of NPC. The first is the ''random'' NPC; this is the street thug, policeman, customs agent, inspector, crewmember, or other individual who lends color to a situation, hinders or helps the party in some straightforward, obvious way, and is otherwise totally lacking in interest to anyone. These individuals will rarely be worth more than a passing glance. They should not even be created in advance; draw them from a supplement as needed. Don't bother to give them names or more than the most rudimentary characteristics (surly, friendly, nervous, or whatever); they won't be around long enough to matter. A second

category of NPCs will be familiar to fans of SF films and TV shows. This individual is usually known as the "extra" or "spear-carrier", and serves a simple but useful purpose. He or she is generally the brawny security guard type, lacking in intelligence or refinement, and is normally sent along to fill in the background and sometimes to graphically demonstrate some danger or difficulty that the party should be on the lookout for. The extra saves wear and tear on player characters during the early stages of an adventure, while everyone is still busy trying to find out what's going on. Referees are encouraged to give only the most sparing attention to their extras since they probably won't be around so long either, but names, characteristics (such as a predilection for cleaning guns or lifting weights while off-duty), and other minor touches will serve to mislead the party so that they aren't totally sure if the NPC is a spear-carrier or a viable NPC. For further research on this particular breed of non-player character, referees are urged to watch reruns of Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, which pioneered the use of the hapless extra as potential victim for that episode's creature, and Star Trek, which added a new meaning to the words "security man" (any character who 1) appeared in the first few minutes of an episode, 2) was wearing a red jacket, and 3) was not a well-known actor or series regular was destined to a quick death to show the audience how the monster worked).

Finally, we come to the third and most important variety of NPC, the full-blown character we described previously. The uses for this character are myriad. Let's take a look at a few of them in greater detail, to see some of the ways a campaign can benefit from this kind of character.

There is, first of all, the scientist/scholar. Not a dynamic individual, and probably not the first choice for many player characters, but a great help to the referee presenting puzzles and mental challenges to the players. Let's face it, most players are going to lack a full familiarity with the background of the referee's universe, even if they are sticking with the Third Imperium developed by GDW. The knowledgeable NPC can serve as a pipeline between referee and players for important facts and clues needed to solve a particular problem. This kind of pipeline can be far superior to the use of a library computer too, since information can be fed in dribs and drabs, corresponding to the length of time a subject is researched, rather than in one fell swoop. Also, information given out through an NPC can be less reliable than that passed on by the computer, should the referee so desire.



Another worthwhile NPC to keep on hand is the villian. This individual can turn up in many situations, but one excellent way to work one in is to make the character a hidden saboteur planted in

the party. Some kind of convenient excuse should be manufactured to get the character involved: expertise in some skill no one else has, or ownership of some vital piece of equipment, such as a ship, that requires the villain's presence. As long as the NPC is present, unforeseen accidents can be brought to bear to plague the party, according to what the referee needs to keep the adventure going. Of course, it is wise to keep the villain's identity a secret during the main body of the adventure, which means that the various disasters can't be too blatant, until the climax is at hand.

Another thing to keep in mind is the need for adventurers to have a chance to vent their frustrations on the villainous character towards the end of the adventure. Revenge of this sort can relieve a lot of built-up anger and provide a pretty nifty ending to the game.

If you do use the "hidden villain travelling with the party" idea, a wise idea is to have two or three other NPCs along who can be used as blind alleys. One could be an incompetent, who can cause trouble by accident, which will drive players crazy trying to puzzle out who is really responsible for their latest string of misfortunes. Is it the obvious chap who keeps making outright mistakes, or a more sinister villain who strikes with subtlety. The referee should remember to use moderation in using these techniques. Don't repeat situations from one adventure in another; use some variety and keep your players guessing.

Patrons, of course, are NPCs, but it is important that the referee try to keep the patron from participating too actively in the adventure. The reason? Having an NPC as the employer of the group, and on the spot, leads to a reduction in player initiative. They tend to stop in the middle of a crisis situation, turn towards the referee, and ask "What does the boss want us to do?". Hardly an inventive way of getting out of trouble.

Patrons should either be unwilling to participate actively or they should be removed from the scene early on, through death, incapacitation, abduction, or some other means. This leaves the characters neck-deep in trouble, on their own, and forced to make crucial decisions without guidance. If the removal was permanent, it may also remove their source of income, a bonus for nasty referees, but a pitfall if you're trying to reward players for their actions. Non-player characters should never be mishandled by making them respond to situations randomly. Minor characters, potential adversaries in a chance encounter, and other such relatively unimportant characters can be governed by the reaction table, but a really important NPC should not be. Wits and planning will be the key to NPC reactions, just as

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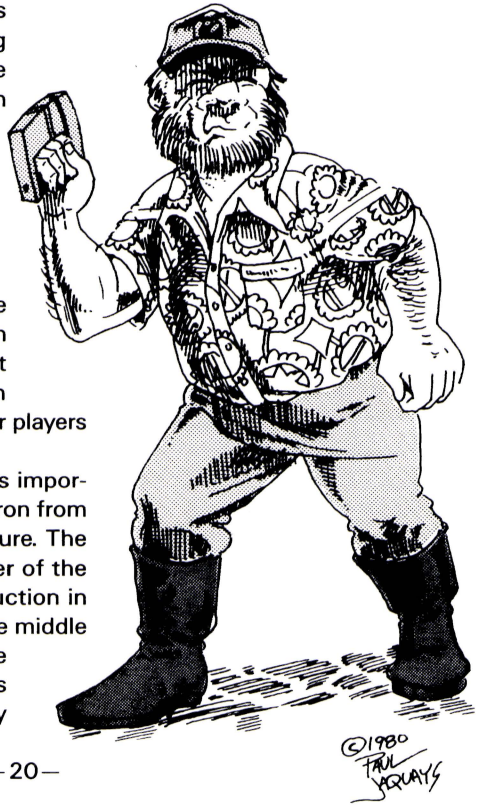


Players' Information:

Zyra (B-555448-7) is one of the youngest colonies in the Trin's Veil subsector. Located on a small world orbiting the largest gas giant of that system (Bellus), Zyra's sixty-thousand inhabitants are concentrated around two harbor cities on the eastern coast of the largest continent. The original survey report showed only low levels of potentially exploitable minerals, and the Zyrans, lacking the equipment and know-how to economically mine these deposits, sought outside help. In return for a significant share of any profits, the interstellar firm of Telneskian Mines and Refining (TM&R) agreed to provide training for the locals.

Information has recently come to light that the original report was inaccurate, and the lesser continents contain a large number of rich and readily exploitable metallic lodes. The Zyran confederacy believes that the company will soon make moves to take over control of the government of Zyra in order to drain the world of its resources.

The Zyran confederacy is seeking a battalion-sized strike force to overpower the TM&R security forces and assist Zyra in nationalizing the company's assets. Upon landing, the mercenaries will be required to make immediate assaults upon the Telneskian industrial regions. The confederacy offers triple standard salaries plus a Cr3,000,000 success only bonus. The Zyran government, unfortunately, is cash poor, and can only offer Cr750,000 up-front money. The Zyrans are prepared to pay immediately in grants of land on Zyra, or in bonds payable in one year (with appropriate interest) backed by the world's extensive

Amber Zone

Thunder on Zyra

mineral resources.

Referee's Information:

As soon as the mercenaries arrive on planet, the unit's commander will be contacted by the Zyran government. In the last two days, the government has learned that the company has obtained two illegal thermonuclear devices (called thunderballs in mercenary jargon), which it has hidden at the mine camp. Further, the government has learned that the company plans to use the devices to hold the Zyran people for ransom in the case of a nationalization attempt. The devices were landed several weeks ago, but the technical personnel needed to arm them either have not yet arrived, or have only just landed. It is imperative that the mercenaries capture the devices before they can be armed.

Ordinarily, no company would dare undertake any venture using thunderballs. TM&R obviously feel that the current war will keep Imperial attentions elsewhere long enough for the company's plans to become a *fait accompli,* and for the incident to be properly hushed-up.

The Zryans have determined that TM&R has beefed-up its normal security forces (normally about four-hundred personnel, armed to tech 9) with a company sized unit of mercenaries. Zyran intelligence has learned that this is under strength, and equipped to tech 11).

The TM&R security patrols (of which six are assigned to the camp) are basically platoon-sized units. A patrol contains five squads, each with 10 security specialists (two fireteams of four each, a squad leader and an assistant squad leader). Each squad has a VRF gauss gun for support; each soldier is armed with an advanced combat rifle and 4 cm RAM grenades. Several dozen individually carried tac missiles are available, but are not normally issued unless the teams are expected to need them. Three-fourths of the 4 cm RAM grenades available are various sorts of riot control gasses (the exact effects of these must be determined by the referee). Each squad is transported in two lightly armored, wheeled ATVs, each equipped with a RAM auto-grenade launcher.

The mercenary team in TM&R's employ is a company-sized unit. The company consists of a 6 man command element, 3 infantry platoons, a weapons platoon and a transport platoon.

Each infantry platoon has 5 squads, each of three fireteams and a lightly armored 12 passenger grav vehicle. In practice, each squad contains only two fireteams, due to heavy casualties suffered during the unit's last ticket. Each grav vehicle is equipped with a VRF gauss gun and RAM auto grenade launcher as the squad support weapons and each soldier is equipped with combat armor and armed with a gauss rifle and 4 cm RAM grenades. A small number (one or two per squad) of individually carried tac missiles are available.

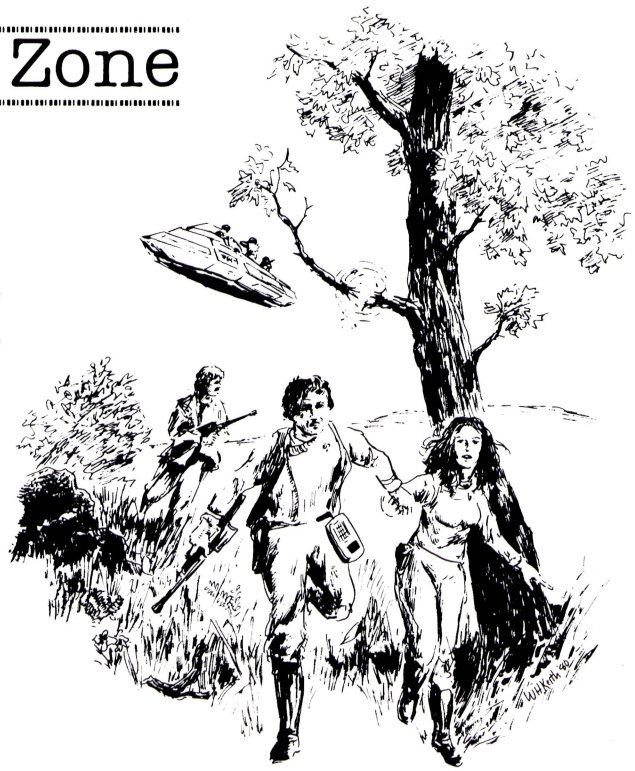
The weapons platoon consists of 2 mortar squads and 2 tac missile squads. The mortar squads contain two mortars and eight personnel. The missile squads contain one tac missile launcher, one 4 cm RAM auto grenade launcher, and eight personnel. Transportation is provided by the vehicles of the transport platoon.

The transport platoon contains 5 cargo grav sleds, each lightly armored and armed with a VRF gauss gun. Each has a crew of two, a driver and a gunner.

The camp where the nuclear devices are stored is a collection of prefabricated buildings, surrounded by an electrified fence and a cleared free-fire zone 300 meters across. The camp contains about 1600 unarmed workers (in addition to the mercenaries and security troops)

continued on page 24

Coup D'etat



Players' Information:

The group is contacted by Glorinna Firella, daughter and sole heir of a planet on the fringes of the Imperium. Her father, Alexandro, is king, a constitutional monarch with a representational parliament. Although a good ruler, Alexandro is not overly popular with his people, and a number of groups in opposition to his reign have risen in recent months. The most dangerous of these, although by no means the largest in number, is a collection of middle echelon military officers and businessmen. Alexandro is surrounded by corrupt and incompetent advisors, and will not believe the extent of popular dissatisfaction with his rule. Glorinna is worried over the possibility of a popular uprising, and suspects that the colonel of the Royal Companions regiment, Kang Ladro, is secretly in sympathy with the rebels. Glorinna is seeking a mercenary contingent to protect herself and her father in the event of revolution.

Referee's Information:

The contract is for a company-sized unit to protect Glorinna and her father. Glorinna, however, has seriously underestimated the extent of unrest, and the rebellion will begin shortly after the unit lands, before any real steps can be taken to secure the situation. Glorinna and the mercenary unit will manage to escape the capital to one of the royal estates, but Alexandro will refuse to come. At the estate, Glorinna will be able to conclude arrangements with the owner of a merchant ship to transport them off-planet. In one week, the vessel can refuel, and enter orbit over the estate. The ship's owner has also promised to arrange for a shuttle to be

available to transfer Glorinna and the company to the ship.

The royal estate is several kilometers from the capital, where fighting is still going on between loyalist army units and those units which have joined the rebellion. The planet's small air force has chosen to remain in barracks for the duration of the emergency. The former Royal Companions regiment is heavily engaged against the loyalists, but Ladro considers it important to capture Glorinna in order to further his scheme to gain power. Ladro aspires to set himself up as king and marriage to Glorinna would strengthen his position. A platoon of the former Companions and two companies of the rebel army have been assigned the task of taking Glorinna alive.

The estate itself is not well suited to defense. It is located in the midst of a lightly wooded region, and is protected on two sides by a small river. The buildings are old stone structures intended to blend aesthetically into the region, not withstand an attack. In the defense along with the mercenaries are a scratch collection of about forty estate employees and local peasants of doubtful fighting value, armed with a random assemblage of civilian hunting weapons and farm implements, with a sprinkling of military weapons such as auto rifles and a grenade or two. In addition, a platoon of local reservists (a total of thirty-two effectives, equipped at TL 6) has rallied to the princess' side. The defenders will have one day to prepare their defenses before the attackers arrive. If they can survive the next six days, the shuttle will be able to provide sufficient air support to drive off the attackers temporarily. During this time, the defenders will be able to be ferried to the orbiting starship.

The attacking forces are a platoon of ex-Companions (forty men) equipped to TL 9, and two companies of regulars, (116 men each) equipped to TL 8.

Glorinna will escape with enough of her personal funds to pay the mercenaries Cr750,000. She will ask them to stay with her, and form the core of a counter-revolutionary force.

— *Loren Wiseman*

continued from page 7

or provoked, with powerful swipes of their long claws.

Their usefulness as trackers makes them valuable trade items. Trained bloodvarks can fetch as much as Cr800 on the world where they are purchased; untrained animals bring about Cr100 each. Their size and single-mindedness makes them unattractive as pets, but because of their intelligence and fierce loyalty, human handlers frequently become quite attached to their charges.

Bloodvarks are oviparous and bisexual. The female digs a den in soft earth under a fallen tree or a large boulder, buries two or three 15 cm eggs under loosely packed soil, and lays over them until they hatch. The young dig themselves out and cling to the mother's abdominal hair, where they hang and nurse for about 5 months.

— *William H. Keith, jr*

continued from page 22

who will take cover once shooting starts.

Several guard towers line the perimeter and the mercenaries and security forces are on constant patrol out to about twenty km away from the camp. About eight minor camps (each with a security squadron permanently stationed) are positioned between one and six days journey away from the main camp.

The equipment of the TM&R security forces and the mercenary company in the firm's employ should be changed by the referee according to the size and armament of the players' forces.

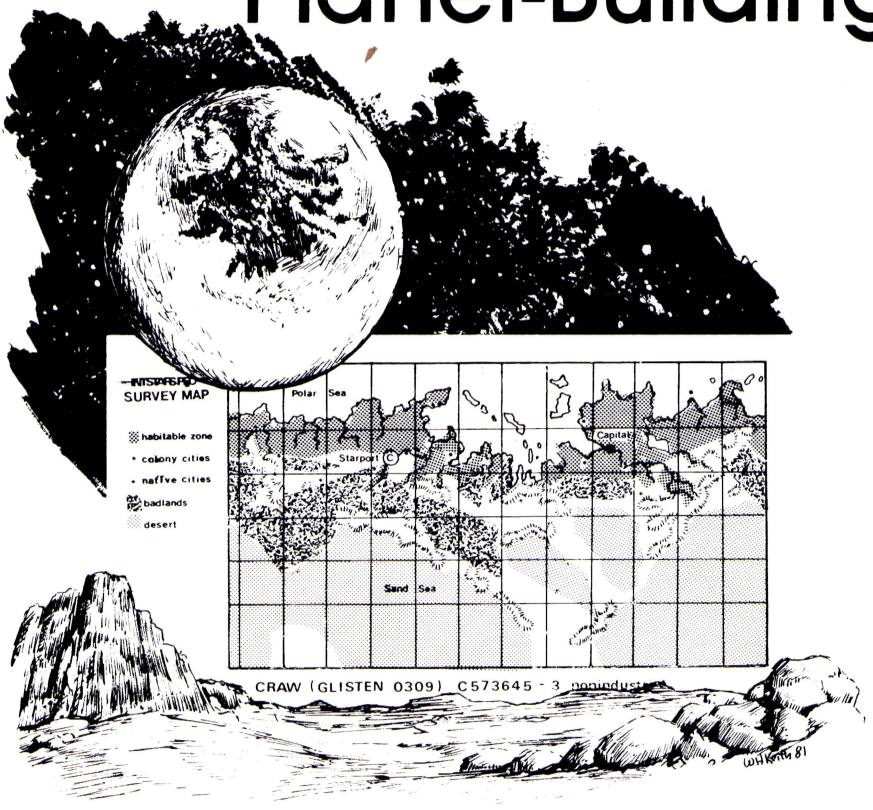
— *Roger Moore*

PART I:

In the **Traveller** game-system, adventure is spread out among dozens, even hundreds of worlds, a wide variety which is not to be found in any other role-playing game available. The large number of planets open to the wandering adventurers of the universe allows the **Traveller** game or campaign to take on almost any aspect inspired by the players and the referee. But, at the same time, it can place something of a strain on everyone involved because of sheer weight of numbers and because of the imagination necessary to give each of those worlds a unique "personality".

The pedestrian (or overworked) referee will find the set of numbers generated in book 3 or consulted in supplement 3, *The Spinward Marches,* sufficient for his or her needs. These numbers define a planet fairly well, up to a point, but they avoid the "flavor" of world-building, the kind of attention to detail that makes SF writers like Poul Anderson, Hal Clement, and Frank Herbert so special. They enter into the game of creating a planet, taking all of the physical, cultural, and biological implications into account to give their worlds a truly special touch. Dune's shifting deserts, the fascinating life-forms of Anderson's Dido, Mesklin

A Referee's Guide to Planet-Building



in all its 700 G glory, these are planets to be remembered.

It isn't hard for the **Traveller** referee to do the same thing, and taking the time to do so is a wise move. Not only will your worlds and the adventures set upon them be more interesting, but many times the well-rounded planet will present new adventure ideas that will help along a campaign in need of a little extra lift. All the information needed to round out planets is available in the **Traveller** literature, helped along by the referee's knowledge and imagination.

Game Designers' Workshop could never hope to provide all of the details of the individual planets in the **Traveller** universe; details of all the myriad facets of our world alone would far exceed the space available in a supplement, book, or adventure. Just imagine what would be necessary to fit a solar system, a subsector, a sector, the Imperium, and all its neighbors into a format that would allow the referee to sit down and look up details on individual planets. Supplements such as *The Spinward Marches* are about the best that can be done. If more detail is needed, imagination and thought must step in and take over.

The letters and numbers that make up a planet's profile are the basic building blocks of a world-building session. In this article, we're going to concentrate on some of the simple, physical attributes of a planet, expanding them into a more detailed picture of the geology, climate, and general background of the world. We'll even have a map and a hint of some of the adventures our projections make possible. The journey from raw data to finished product involves the use of the **Traveller** books and supplements, some general knowledge of our Earth and how it works, and above all, a combination of imagination and careful consideration of what will make the planet consistent with reality while still providing a source for excitement.

For our demonstration, we will refer to supplement 3, *The Spinward Marches.* On page 26, in the Glisten subsector, we come across a world by the name of Craw (Glisten 0309). The entry for the planet reads as follows:

C573645 3 Non-industrial G

Physical data comes first, if we ignore (for the moment) the starport. The size of 5 gives the planet a diameter of 5000 miles, (8000 km) making it rather on the small side as compared to Earth. The atmosphere, however, is type 7, (standard, with some kind of taint). Now, a planet the size of Mars with an Earth-like atmosphere is interesting; it points, possibly, to an Earth-like gravity. The simplest explanation, the one which won't have us meddling with scientific constants, is that the planet has roughly the same mass as Earth packed into a smaller diameter.

So, while Craw is small, its greater density gives it a gravity close to our own. This might lead the referee to modify or ignore the rule on carrying capacity from book 1 for characters adventuring on this particular planet. In addition, this high density points to a high concentration of heavy metals. Craw could be quite an attractive place, thanks to this factor. We could be dealing with one of those famous treasure-trove worlds; platinium, iridium, osmium, who knows what valuable minerals might be ripe for the taking here?

Before we finish analyzing the atmosphere, we'll skip ahead to the third number, Craw's hydrographic percentage. At 30%, there is not much in the way of water to be found in large bodies here. There are many possible ways we could use this data. Craw's oceans could be tied up in vast glaciers, locked in the grip of an ice age, or they could take the

form of many hundreds of small lakes, tiny seas, or massive swamps; for this discussion, we've chosen the most obvious solution, a small, dry desert world with a narrow habitable zone surrounding a landlocked polar sea.

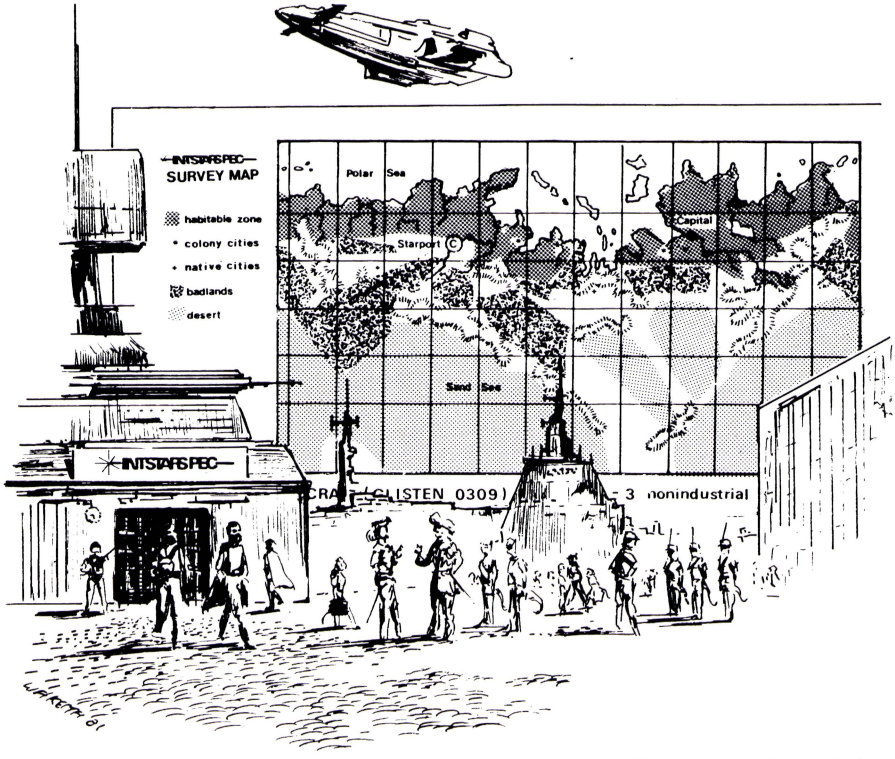
This leads back to our tainted atmosphere. The **Traveller** rules leave us a lot of leeway in determining the nature of a "tainted atmosphere". Anything from volcanic outgassing to poisons left from an ancient war can be covered by the phrase. The important thing is to make the air as appealing to a human character as Los Angeles on a hot summer day; in other words, nearly unbreathable. Our picture of the world has thus far given us a desert covering most of the planetary surface. If we assume a normal photosynthetic cycle for native plant life, we conclude that the taint could in this case result from a low percentage of oxygen in the air, caused by the lack of plants in the interior. Again, the referee might want to amend the rules slightly. Filter masks will not be important on this world; it isn't an impurity to be filtered out that makes this planet a problem. Oxygen gear would be more useful, but pressure being standard, there is no need for pressure suits or other such gear. By taking it easy, most healthy humans can probably manage to survive on the planet with no extra gear at all.

From the information we have put together so far, our map of Craw takes shape nicely. If using a hex-grid, the referee must be careful to keep to scale, and to use the right mathematical formulae for computing circumference. It is also important to keep in mind what is known about the world, and make sure the work invested finds its way onto the finished map.

As we contemplate the terrain of this world, it is good to keep in mind that no planet is going to be a homogeneous unit. Ice planets, desert planets, and jungle planets, can be found in SF literature and popular movies, but rarely will we find a world where a one-word description can give us a perfect mental image of the surface of the entire world. Our world, Craw, is a world with (we presume) an arid, hot, harsh climate. This does not mean, though, that one part of Craw will look pretty much like another. Craw has a surface area of something like 72 million square miles, so there is plenty of room for variety! We can say that the polar sea was once larger, so that we can find vast expanses of water-carved badlands, dotted with lonely mesas, fragile natural bridges, and delicate rock-sculptures that howl and moan when the wind blows. There are also great salt flats, blinding to unshielded eyes and ruinous to unprotected equipment. Of course, there are large expanses of open, sahara-like desert, with wave upon wave of dunes rolling into the distance, breaking against the feet of crumbling mountains. The broad range of Earthly environments should serve as a source from which the referee can paint a picture of the world; the keynote, though, is variety.

And so we have a world. Not all of the steps in our decision-making process were recorded here. Sometimes we skipped ahead to the information on population and culture, using them to influence our physical data. While not strictly correct from a scientific viewpoint, this is necessary to give the world the best make-up for the adventures we'll want to have, so a little fudging is always permissible.

What's left? Physically, very little. Craw is rich in minerals but with a harsh climate and a lot of unpleasant real estate that adventurers will be less than thrilled to visit. Referees can use physical facts by themselves to launch a few interesting adventures, even without the



benefit of information on the peoples or cultures of the planet. There are heavy metals to be sought, survival situations in which crashed adventurers must overcome nature, rescue missions to aid other shipwrecked vessels; the fiendish and fertile mind of the referee will find dozens of ways and means to irritate the players.

Up to this point, we have looked at the simplest part of planetary creation. Next, we will take up those elements which really put an individual stamp on a world: the inhabitants.

CULTURE

This begins, of course, with the people. Craw has a population level of 6. There are between one and ten million inhabitants here, a rather small population even on so harsh a world. At random, we will say there are about seven million people on Craw.

Who are they? In answer, we turn to the tech level of 3. They are a culture just at the edge of the industrial revolution that swept Earth in the late 1700's. This could indicate that they are an alien race whose technology is only beginning to reach a level of sophistication or it could point to a small population of humans, Imperial citizens, established around the starport, whose colony is new enough to prohibit the manufacture of goods more advanced than steam engines and the like. (We can imagine that most recently opened colonies will not be able to produce sophisticated gear. Many would have the look of Old Earth frontier cultures, using fairly primitive gear because they have no ability to manufacture more sophisticated items, and do not have enough of an established economy to buy advanced goods.

For our purposes, we choose yet another alternative, the classic SF ploy of the "lost colony" of humans whose technology has slipped back since the days of their first landing. Many factors, and particularly the harsh necessities of

survival in this inhospitable clime, have contributed to their decline.

Seven million humans make up the population reflected in the planetary profile, but 7 million is an awfully small number of people to support a budding industrial revolution. In order to give us a sufficient agrarian base on which to build, we will postulate a sizable (though rather uncertain) population of intelligent, indigenous natives as well. We'll sketch them rather briefly: roughly humanoid, adapted to life in Craw's rugged outback, with an average tech level no greater than one, except for those living closer to humans, who enjoy a slightly higher technology.

Many of these primitive locals, being adapted to the planet's oxygen poor atmosphere, will be used for heavy labor by the humans. In this case, slaves and wandering nomadic natives simply aren't going to be counted as part of the population. The situation is somewhat similar to the United States prior to 1865. These natives are enslaved by the humans, but ever prone to revolts. We should also note in passing that the government is type 4, a representative democracy, which in no way precludes this picture of a slave-holding society. Athenian Greece, Republican Rome, and, of course, our own United States have all displayed this symptom of conflict between democratic idealism and commercial necessity.

Naturally the humans look upon these natives as an inferior race and, just as naturally, those natives not enslaved will roam the outback, resenting and usually attacking on sight all humans they come across, including distressed wayfarers.

The government is another area where we will follow the spirit rather than the letter of the rules. We see listed a representative democracy, and picture something akin to our own system. However, as we've pointed out previously, a world can rarely be considered as a monolithic whole. Time and distance assume great importance on a world where flight is not known and the steam engine is still new; to assume a world government under such circumstances is to ignore most of the realities of history and, at the same time, to ignore some interesting potentials for increasing player interest as well.

So even though we do not have a balkanized government, the nominal central government can by no means be considered to be completely in control, and a number of possibilities present themselves for quasi-independent areas.

First, the natives will have their own governmental systems (those that are not enslaved, anyway), which will vary from one group to another.

If we picture Earth in the period of history in question, we see some other possibilities open up. For instance, the representative democracy is reminiscent of the thirteen colonies just after the revolution, so why not carry out the analogy on Craw? A mother country, possibly a dictatorship, a bureaucracy, or oligarchy, is the nominal supreme power on Craw, with numerous colonies scattered throughout the habitable zone. One of these, our democracy, has just gone through a period of revolutionary turmoil to break with their founders, leaving bad feelings and the possibility of fresh conflict looming on the horizon. There's lots to keep us interested here!

The next question is, why is the democracy, apparently a minor power, listed in the planetary profile? The obvious reason is that contact with off-worlders (i.e., the starport) is centered in the democracy's territory.

The starport is a class C port, located on a tech 3 world. It has to be owned and operated by off-worlders; there's just no way to get around it! Why is such a fair-

sized port located on such a backwater world? If there were military bases present, we might argue strategic concerns. Since this isn't the case, we must look further. Commerce is the other major contender, and as we've already postulated the valuable resources on this treasure-trove world, we leap to the image of a corporate base on the world exploiting the mineral wealth and shipping it off-planet.

This adds another interesting facet to our picture. Can we make the assumption that there is a specific reason for the company to be dealing with the democracy? Commercial concerns have been known to meddle in local affairs in order to improve their profits. If the mother country on Craw wasn't willing to make a good deal, it might well be that the company encouraged a small revolution in exchange for better concessions. We can imagine the company keeping a few mercenaries on hand to guard their interests and serve as a deterrent against the mother country interfering with the democracy.

Thus, with a few quick strokes, we've added quite a bit of complexity and realism to the situation on Craw. We have numerous factions and interests, each a possible source for conflict and adventure: the company (We've called it InStarSpec), the democracy, the mother country, other colonies, the slaves, the free natives in the outback; each of these will keep things hopping.

How about life on Craw? A good parallel might be found in India during the 1800's, under the British Raj. Here we have a small body of people surrounded by a large body of natives, who are treated as inferior menials. On Craw, there might be native troops in human-officered military forces, equivalent of British Sepoy and Gurkha troops. The two human countries often confront one another, as France and Britain frequently did in colonial India. Tribesmen from the outback cause problems for both, too.

Clothing, customs, religions, details of art, architecture, music, and other aspects of the culture can all be filled in by the referee to whatever extent is deemed necessary, drawing from British India and colonial America. The realities of Craw, though, will influence things quite a bit, such as the lack of wood as a building material. Don't neglect these details; they add much to the impact of your descriptions during the course of play. And even as you draw upon the past to provide a model for your cultures, remember not to make things too commonplace or familiar. If there is any one universal in the **Traveller** universe, it is diversity; you'll have to seek out elements of strangeness. Luckily, there are plenty of exotic cultures and customs right here on Earth, just choose the ones that best fit your world.

Taking a look at the rest of our stats, let's mention law level. Judging from external evidence, the low population, the tech level, and such, we can say that the company has probably not done much to interfere in local society once the revolution cleared the way for their presence. We thus decide that this law level is probably company-imposed, rather than a function of native enforcement; InStarSpec doesn't want anyone to disturb the balance of power they've nurtured. Arms limits will apply to people leaving the starport; travellers elsewhere will not be stopped by natives or human settlers looking for weapons. They might, in fact, be able to sell these if they've managed to smuggle them out of the starport. Law level can still be used normally to judge frequency of harassment and other such legal matters, but a party landing away from port need not worry about the kind of weaponry carried.

On the other hand, this argues that In-

StarSpec, determined to keep things under tight control, might well patrol the planet from orbit with small ships, to make sure visitors go to the starport. They might even maintain patrols or even a small base out near the gas giant, to tighten control of the system further. The referee will have to adjust the ship encounters rules to take these factors into account.

Craw is listed as ''non-industrial'' in the stats, which does not in any way contradict what we've said about an industrial revolution in progress here. It means that local goods are of no great interest to the Imperium, and that the company will be forced to import certain gear for use in their mining operations. This might give the referee some ideas for getting the adventurers to Craw, say by a charter to carry heavy equipment in, or some similar cargo that cannot be obtained locally.

So there we have it! The planet is no longer just a string of letters and numbers in supplement 3, it is a logical, self-consistent world. And look at all the adventures we've made possible: slave revolts, mutinies in the manner of the Sepoy Rebellion in India, warfare open or secret between two nations, attempts by the company to open new mines in the outback, regardless of native threats, competition from rival firms, backing locals or native tribesmen, mercenary tickets, and so on. With the addition of a clear-cut cultural background, we now have expanded the options of a **Traveller** campaign a thousand-fold.

Where do we go from here? The world is waiting, but many details must yet claim the referee's attention. In part II, we will go one step further on Craw by describing the planet's biology and ecology, and how humans will interact with both.

Before you read further, however, think how you would handle it. The principles are not much different from what we've done already. While your at it, take a few other worlds, either your own or from supplements, and expand them as we have done here. You've seen a few of the options, explore some of the others. Your planets, your **Traveller** adventures, can be and should be every bit as good as the best science fiction you've ever read or seen.

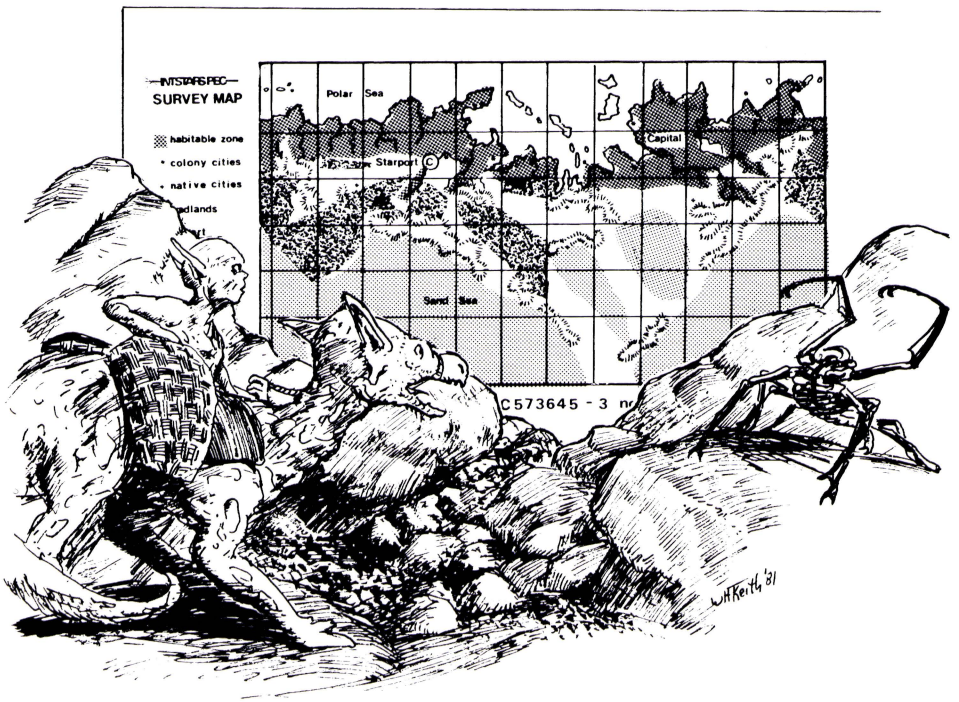
PART II:

Long before role-playing games were even thought of, weird and exotic creatures were a major part of many science fiction stories. Some were intelligent aliens, many were almost identical to humans, the best were unusual (to say the least) by human standards, but all could be placed in one of two simple categories: those that were believable and those that weren't.

Believability has nothing to do with size, shape, color, or number of legs/arms/tentacles/eyes/scales or whatever. Believability is based on only two points: 1) does the creature fit into its environment? and 2) do the creature's behavior and motivations make sense in that environment?

We often lose track of these precepts for believability in role-playing games. All too often, our horrible beasties will leap for no apparent reason on unsuspecting adventurers, there to rend, maul, and otherwise inconvenience everyone in sight. Perhaps we have been corrupted by fantasy games, where beasties of every description can live in a totally unsuitable environment, living exclusively off of the occasional passing wayfarer (who must be few and far between), with no way of justifying their continued survival except through some form of ''magic''.

But science fiction, or at least the kind of SF elevated to prominance by the likes of Anderson, Niven, and Clement re-



quires more than an airy and oversimplified dismissal of reality. We must learn to put our creations in the proper perspective, make them fit reasonable biological and ecological laws, in order to make our **Traveller** adventure something more sophisticated than a Captain Video space opera.

Let's return to Craw, that lovely vacation spot in the Glisten Subsector of the Spinward Marches, for a look at how alien beasties can be made to fit a given environment. Craw, as you may remember, is a medium sized world with a roughly earth-like gravity and a standard density, oxygen poor atmosphere. The planet is hot and arid, with a narrow habitable zone circling a small polar sea; beyond that zone lies a variety of unpleasant terrain, including desert, badlands, and other uninviting real estate that humans will find less than accommodating. But life will exist out there; life evolved to fit Craw's exacting conditions. To this life, Craw will not be inhospitable, will not be barely tolerable, it will be home.

Where do we start in our analysis of life on Craw? Animals can be created in accordance with book 3, or drawn from the encounter tables of supplement 3, *Animal Encounters.* But because the creatures created by the **Traveller** system must be able to fit any of the hundreds of worlds adventurers might travel to, the entries we derive from these sources will be strings of numbers and characteristics, much like the planetary statistics we analyzed in previous articles. Once again we are faced with the task of translating raw data into a fleshed-out, well-rounded whole. In order to create a believable beastie, to have it take on a real form instead of a vague and shadowy hinted image, we must examine the creature in terms of the en-

vironment and ecology which lies behind and around it. By doing this we will find our encounters far more interesting than they ever were before.

Now the first life form we analyze won't be from an animal encounter table. We have already postulated a native, intelligent life form which is used by human settlers as slave labor, or found wandering the outback as nomadic tribesmen. From this dominant species, we can envision many of the basic characteristics of all life on Craw, since creatures evolved from the same basic conditions and stock should have at least a few points in common.

We made the natives humanoid during our first brief sketch of them, mostly out of a desire for speed; it is also amusing to picture them as native sepoys, officered by humans, forced to adopt ill-tailored uniforms but basically looking human. Now we can fill in some more facts about them. We will allow the same basic biochemistry as humans, again for speed and simplicity, and also to avoid little incompatabilities such as lack of trace elements or reversed amino acids that would prove deadly to humans trying to live within the native ecosphere. They'll have the same need for air and water as their off-world masters; making them leathery-skinned and rather short to help conserve body water. Tough skin also protects them from desert sun, wind-blown sand, and hot, sharp rocks underfoot. Note that many other adaptations are possible, but these particular features seem to fit our mental image of this particular race rather nicely. In creating for **Traveller**, a feeling for what fits is the referee's most useful tool.

Craw's atmosphere is short on oxygen, giving it a "taint" that most off-worlders will find hard to cope with. The natives won't have technological assistance to help them breathe, therefore they must be adapted to this low oxygen content and like it. They will have barrel chests to hold the large lungs necessary to extract oxygen from the atmosphere in the quantities they need. When competing with a human with an adequate oxygen supply, they will have a lower endurance, though on their own terms, when both a human and a native are breathing the air unassisted, the natives will last longer every time.

Here's another twist: oxygen, to our natives, is a powerful intoxicant. A whiff from an off-worlder's supply will fog their minds and produce a drunken condition; an overdose of oxygen can kill. This is a nice touch of "chrome" that gives these natives some extra character.

Our natives are not strictly nocturnal, as this would make it too hard to fit them in with the settlers, but they no doubt do move and hunt by night when they can, to avoid the heat of the desert outback. They will have large eyes, with two eyelids: one a nictitating membrane to shield out strong light reflected from open desert plains, the other is tougher, more leathery, to keep out particles of sand whipped up by desert storms. Hearing and smell will both be better than a human's. They will be able to sniff out hidden pockets of water for example. For this reason alone, adventurers in the outback will want a sturdy native guide to help them survive.

Finally, we give our friends short, thick, flexible tails, for balance as they scramble across rocks and cliff faces; and fingers and toes equipped with roughened, knobby tips. They can't climb a sheer vertical wall, but they'll be able to get to places where no player would expect them to reach!

Cultural details have little place here, and so are to be developed as we discussed in our last article. One aspect of the environment, however, which will have an impact on our natives is the absence of wood on Craw. Don't give

them wooden buildings, don't arm them with spears or other polearms, give them some other material, such as a long, flexible weed grown in the habitable zone, which can be woven into clothes, used as a building material, and used to produce slings or bolas, a major weapon for these people. Don't have these natives using tools or other items which don't fit the native ecology.

Now we've pretty well described one life form on Craw. What about others?

We'll use supplement 2, *Animal Encounters,* for our beasties. The planet is a "medium world, standard atmosphere" despite all the peculiarities we've developed. In the clear terrain section, which corresponds to the habitable plains around the sea, entry number six reads: Grazer, 400kg, 21/8, none, 10, teeth, F8 A9 S2

Here's a prime candidate for Craw's main beast of burden. The natives will use it, as will the Tech 3 humans. Even the more advanced off-worlders we find will probably use this sturdy little beast, as it is certainly easier to fuel and replace than expensive, complicated, imported machinery. Don't forget, a backwater like Craw will rarely have a lot of sophisticated gear floating around for anyone to use.

Four hundred kilograms makes this animal smaller than a terran horse, but about the size of a large pony. It has moderate speed, and no armor to speak of. This will probably be a highly developed animal, and fairly closely related to the native, just as the horse is not all that different, biologically speaking, from a human. Note that we will not attempt to classify our animals as mammallian, reptilian, or whatever. They may have features in common with terran species, but they are not the same!

As a close relative of our native, the beast of burden will have the leathery skin, enormous lungs and chest capacity, and other adaptations we developed for the natives. The feet will be similar to the knobby, rough-ended digits of the natives, but splayed to carry weight on soft sand. The legs are short in relation to the body. Remember that the beast and native are closely related, which means the number of limbs will stay consistent from one life form to another. Multi-legged creatures (more than four, that is) are fun, but they must fit into the ecology you're creating.

These animals use their teeth in combat, as do terrestrial horses; but we're going to make these creatures omnivorous, an adaptation that will increase their chances of survival in the outback. This also allows us to see a nicely curved and gleaming set of canine teeth protruding from the upper and lower jaws.

There's our first beast, now fully described for the players. If you're artistically inclined, a quick sketch such as the one we have shown will help immeasurably. Give it a name, and your beastie is ready to play its part in the adventures to come.

How about a predator? Number 3 of the desert encounter table is listed as: Hunter, 6 kg, 6/9, jack-1, 3, as blade, A5 F7 S1.

Six kilograms is the size of a small dog. The creature is rather hard to kill, considering this, and the armor is nearly as effective as jack. It is rather slow, which suggests that it may capture its prey by a stealthy approach and a sudden pounce.

For the rocky wastes of Craw, we've developed this data into a small animal called a rock spider by the human settlers. It is not, of course, a spider, but it does have a superficial resemblance to the large hunting spiders of earth. This can be a much lower form of life than previous specimens, which means we can give it a long, squat body with ten jointed legs. It, too, has a leathery hide,

thickened over its back into a flexible carapace. The hide is colored and textured to blend in among rocks, and we can expect to find it in crevices among loose boulders.

These little hunters won't have the barrel-chested physiology of the higher forms; exaggerated breathing movements would give them away as they sneak up on prey. Nor can we give them spiracles or book lungs, as they are too large. We'll give them instead, breathing organs on either side of the abdomen, protected by the posterior sets of legs and by loose flaps of skin. Forced air circulates freely across a convoluted blood-rich membrane suggestive of the gills of a terrestrial fish. The organs will be sensitive, and hence well-protected. Heat sensitivity will make it necessary for the beast to be a nocturnal hunter, keeping to shaded nooks and crannies in the heat of the day.

Its forward set of legs have inner surfaces hardened and shaped into natural weapons very like curved blades. The rock spider attacks its prey by throwing the anterior legs over the victim, slashing down, and drawing it against its sucking beak. When threatened, the creature raises its front legs over its back, and will slash viciously at anything that moves.

Normal prey for the rock spider would be small animals the size of rats or squirrels; it wouldn't normally want to eat people! The specs show us, though, that no one is safe from possible attack; it is a testy animal, more likely to attack than to flee. It is not poisonous, but the slash wounds it inflicts are long, deep and prone to infection. The bite would be an extremely painful puncture wound. Boots or other protection would be useful, of course.

Here, then, we have three typical life forms found on Craw, changed from vague pictures and stats into really well-rounded beasts. But, refering back to our prerequisites on believability, we find we've filled only the first part of the requirements. What about behavior for these, or any other, animals?

All animals have reasons behind their actions. Of all life on Earth, only humans will attack irrationally. Other animals may kill for food, territory, defense, or whatever, but they have a reason! This is extended to our exotic beasties too. Before you have something try to devour the adventurers, stop and think: what does it eat when it can't get wayfarers? Are humans really going to be tasty to this predator? What other reason might underlie the thing's actions?

Animal behavior can offer diverting (or deadly) moments of adventure that have nothing to do with between-meal snacks. For example, an encounter with 63 grazers could be a stampede requiring quick thinking on the part of the players. Particular behavior patterns (a tyranosaurian male defending his harem and young, or a predatory bird defending territory) can be brought into play to give reason to a sudden and unprovoked animal attack. Those Crawan rock spiders, for example, probably pose the greatest threat to people scrambling over rocks, putting feet or hands into hiding places or threatening the beast. Another possibility is for a sleeping adventurer to awaken to find a 13 pound rock spider on his chest, slashers ready; the poor thing was just out hunting, and now finds the ground moving! Animals will threaten or attack for good reasons, even if those reasons are not immediately visible to the attackees.

We hope you've enjoyed your visit with us to Craw, and come away with a better idea of the myriad ways you can round out your adventures through some carefully considered expansions of the basic stats on a planet, or a creature, or whatever. The process takes a little

continued on page 41

Scientist/Archeologist

Dev Landrel 6B88B6 Age 38 5 terms MCr1.5

Leader-1, Jack-o-Trades-2, Computer-1, Body Pistol-1

An amateur xenoarcheologist, Landrel has long been fascinated by the Ancients, whose star-spanning culture flourished some 300,000 years before the rise of the Third Imperium. Landrel is the son of a wealthy planetary official, and is, himself, independently wealthy. He spends his time following leads to possible Ancient sites and organizing private archeological excavations under his own leadership.

Landrel is snobbish, vain, and temperamental, given to impatience and fits of explosive rage. This, coupled with

his opinionated and stubborn beliefs (even in the face of evidence to the contrary), leaves him poorly suited to the work of archeology. He is quite incapable of the painstaking and exacting work found in field excavation, and equally unable to master the tact and diplomacy required in dealing with people — either fellow archeologists or representatives of officialdom.

Landrel's lack of patience is typified by his tendency to rush into jobs without preparation or precaution, often on the spur of the moment and with only the slightest excuse. He tends to feel that he, and he alone, is competent in the field of the Ancients; all others, especially the recognized authorities in the field, he considers to be fools and dolts. He will brook no delay in his work; he has been accused of undermining the foundations of a 1500 year old building — a memorial to the first colonists on Gram — while digging for a rumored cache of Ancient artifacts that was supposed to exist below. Instead he discovered the wreckage of an early colonial transport vessel, almost completely intact. The ship was of an age such that it might have been the first colonization ship to reach Gram, a priceless treasure. He did not bother to properly excavate or study the ship, but merely photographed enough of it to give him the basis for an article in a popular magazine. The site was seriously damaged in his continued search for artifacts. He is still wanted by the Sword Worlds government for destruction of public historical treasures.

Two basic urges lie at the root of Landrel's activities. First and foremost is the desire to have his theories, which have received considerable criticism, vindicated. Among his more controversial ideas, Landrel refuses to accept the popular consensus that holds the Ancients to be represented in present times by the Droyne. Landrel maintains that the Droyne are merely the remnants of an unimportant servile race, and that the Ancients were, in fact, of a stock similar to humaniti. He also is convinced that he has clues to the location of the Ancient homeworld — which he claims is now a free or wandering planet somewhere in the Spinward Marches — which, if he could discover it, would once and for all assure him the place in the annals of archeology that he desires above all else in the universe.

Landrel is also very much attracted to the material side of archeological discovery. He is known to have smuggled artifacts off of planets where local law would otherwise have limited his access to them; it is rumored that he has engaged in out-and-out plundering of priceless storehouses of archeological lore merely to satisfy his own interest in antiquities. His colleagues disdainfully refer to him as "the Treasure Hunter" when they mention his name at all.

Adventurers might come across Dev Landrel in any of a number of ways. He may recruit them to act as his bodyguards during one of his shadier exploits, such as an attempt to smuggle artifacts off-world. They might be offered a job as escorts for an expedition he is putting together into a wild, dangerous area where he believes Ancient artifacts to exist.

On the other hand, agents from the Sword Worlds or some other defrauded government might approach the adventurers, asking them to locate Landrel and bring him to justice. Personal enemies from the scientific community may desire revenge for some slight or injury, or they might seek to "plant" the adventurers on one of Landrel's expeditions in order to discredit him in some way.

There is also a chance that Landrel will simply appear as a chance acquaintance, met aboard a starship or in a fancy star-

continued on page 41

Kian

(Pseudostruthio gigas)

Kians are herbivore grazers of large size, originally known from Prilissa in Trin's Veil subsector. Due to their hardy nature, they were exported to a number of worlds as beasts of burden, and are a common sight in the coreward reaches, both in the wild and in captivity. They are plains dwellers, travelling in herds of 10 to 60 individuals, feeding upon grasses, leaves, or similar plant matter.

Externally, the kian is a large bipedal creature with a long neck, short tail, and no other limbs (the remains of an atrophied pair of fore-limbs can be found in some species. Kians are thickly furred, their coats showing distinctive color patters of brown, gold, lemon-yellow, and black. A kian's legs are powerfully muscled for fast movement over long distances. The sturdiness of their overall frames has made them a frequent choice for use as mounts and pack animals on the planets where they occur. Kian's hearing and eyesight are extremely good, reflecting their predator-laden environment of origin.

Internally, the Kian is unremarkable. It has a closed circulatory system and an overall high metabolism which requires that it be fed 30 to 50 kilograms of vegetable matter daily. The kian digestive system consists of two stomachs, which allows the animal to break down the toughest plant matter into digestible form. The kian has a thick layer of fat which insulates in cooler climates and provides a degree of protection from the venomous bites or stings of some small animals. The skeleton is strong and heavy, and is structurally not unlike that of the moa and other prehistoric terrestrial flightless birds.

When attacked or frightened, kians will usually flee, but if cornered are capable of delivering deadly kicks with either of their hooved feet. The large claws projecting from the backs of the feet are only present in the male, and seem to be used solely for ritual combat between males prior to mating.

Kians can carry up to 250 kilos comfortably, and will refuse to move if overloaded. Kians cannot tolerate thin atmospheres, and require a special filter/muzzle (Cr50) for tainted atmospheres.

— *Roger Moore*

Number & Type:	*Weight:*	*Hits:*	*Armor:*	*Wounds & Weapons:*
10—60 Grazer	400 kg	25/10	jack	10 Hooves A9 F4 S3

Noble/Heiress

Glorinna Firella 4A6AAF Age 26 2 terms Cr0 to ?
Leader-1, Liaison-1, Dagger-1

Until recently, Glorinna was princess and sole heiress to the throne of a planetary government near the edge of the Imperium. The government was more or less along the lines of a constitutional monarchy with a representational parliament. However, a popular front uprising, possibly inspired by off-planet interests, deposed her father, the king, and erected a military junta in his stead. Glorinna

managed to escape the rebels, but her father was taken and has not been heard of since. He is presumed either dead or imprisoned.

Now an exile, Glorinna is bending all her efforts towards engineering a return to her world and a counter-coup against the rebels. She is also driven to learn the fate of her father, and to rescue him if he is still alive. The particular object of her bitter hatred is General Kang Ladro, once head of the Royal Companions regiment, who betrayed her father and brought the Royalist army over to the rebels in order to gain power. Ladro is now part of the junta, and wants Glorinna dead or (preferably) married to him in order to secure his position. Ladro aspires to a re-establishment of the monarchy, with himself as king, and sees Glorinna's great popularity with the masses as his key to absolute power.

The rest of the junta is divided, the majority desiring a "popular dictatorship," a strong minority under Ladro's leadership looking towards the renewed monarchy. The populace itself is greatly dissatisfied with the junta, which has imposed repressive military control over all phases of daily life without doing anything to keep the promises of redistribution of wealth to the impoverished. They are strongly in favor of the return of the monarchy (though much too afraid of the junta to show it), and will support the return of Glorinna, who has always (unlike her father) been a popular and charismatic figure.

Glorinna is beautiful and regal, but talented in winning the loyalty and devotion of others and in no way snobbish. She is brave, and keeps a cool head in a crisis; but her strong ingrained sense of honor makes it certain that she will handsomely reward those who aid her. Her greatest weakness is a romantic, sentimental streak; there is a chance, to be determined by the referee, that she will fall in love with one of the adventurers, or possibly some other individual, whom she believes shares her devotion to the cause. This chance is especially improved if she meets the individual under dangerous or "romantic" circumstances, such as being rescued from some hazardous situation in the course of her adventures. Her impulsive heart often makes her easy prey for fortune-hunters.

Should Glorinna fall in with a party of adventurers, she will be patient and willing to go out of her way if she feels some benefit would be won from the diversion. She will not, however, lose sight of her own goals, and if need be will part company as readily as she jointed. Her ultimate goal is, of course, to raise funds and troops enough to oust the junta; she will tend to assume that others attach the same degree of importance to this goal as she does. Under no circumstances will she be turned from her course, either by arguments or by knowledge of danger; she may postpone her plans for the sake of expediency, but will never abandon them, and she will regard any who tries to persuade her against the enterprise as a coward or worse.

Glorinna is accompanied in her travels by Ek, a 2.2 meter mute utterly devoted to her. He is suspicious of outsiders, and will take orders from no one except the princess. Ek is particularly suspicious of anyone showing a romantic interest in her. Glorinna will not dismiss Ek; he is kept on as her personal servant and bodyguard, because "he's been in the family for years."

Glorinna Firella may come to the attention of the adventurers in one of many ways. They might, for example, actually be involved in the coup on her homeworld, and be approached for help in escaping the planet aboard their ship. There is a good chance she will approach

adventurers later, recruiting them as bodyguards, or hiring travellers with military experience as advisors or officers for the army she is putting together. She may also hire mercenary units to assist in raising her army, on cadre, striker or commando missions in connection with her attempt to return, or in other capacities. There is also an excellent chance that she would hire a band of adventurers to learn the whereabouts of her father, and then to rescue him.

The party might also be approached by Ladro's agents, who would offer an exorbitant reward for them to kidnap or kill her. The adventurers would find, however, that Ladro is not entirely trustworthy when it comes to honoring agreements. Other adventurers could well revolve around the divisions within the junta, with other factions seeking to hold the princess as a bargaining counter against Ladro, for example.

Finally, the referee might involve the adventurers in the situation by having Glorinna turn up as a fellow passenger aboard a starship, a chance acquaintance met at a hotel or bar on some planet, or as the victim of one or more assailants in the street. In this case, the adventurers might be caught in the middle and shoved into one or more adventures without real freedom of action.

Glorinna's finances are subject to considerable fluctuation; the referee should determine how much money she has available according to the nature of the situation. She may be able to pay well for services rendered, or the adventurers might have to rely on the promise of money tied in with her own success in reaching her goal.

— *J. Andrew Keith*

continued from page 37

port hotel or bar. In this case, he might offer them jobs, or the group might be caught in the middle of trouble when assailants attack Landrel. If the adventurers are offered jobs with Landrel, there is a possibility that he will abandon them, salaries unpaid, when he decides to move on to another excavation.

Lastly, there is a chance that Landrel will have artifacts of the Ancients or art treasures in his possession when the group encounters him; in this case, there is a possibility that members of the group will want to rob him (in this case, Landrel should have a bodyguard of two to make things interesting for the players). It should be pointed out that the relics Landrel is usually able to find are valuable for their artistic or historical interest rather than being miracle gadgets of high technology. Referees should avoid introducing "magical" items, as these will tend to upset the balance of a campaign.

It is recommended that referees study more about the Ancients when they introduce Landrel as an NPC to an adventure. More information is in Adventure 3, *Twilight's Peak* and Supplement 8, *Library Data.* Remember, Landrel's theories differ from accepted beliefs.

— *J. Andrew and William H. Keith, Jr*

continued from page 35

extra time, we admit. One reason why you might want to buy some of the supplements is to help with this time factor; supplements save you the mechanical, time-consuming process of rolling up characteristics, leaving you more time for the more important creative work that goes on in your mind.

It might seem a waste of effort to detail a world that your players will land on, look at, and leave in a few days, but you'll find that the more detail a world has, the more interest it will generate.

Put your knowledge and creativity to work. Everyone involved will enjoy a "real" world much more than the dry, sketchy work of a hasty referee.

— *J. Andrew Keith*

Archaic Missile Weapons

The weapons listed below are usable with both *Striker* and *Azhanti High Lightning.*

Sling: This is the typical david-and-Goliath type, not the y-shaped stick.

Short Bow: A small bow, usually between 50 and 75 cm in length. All three bow types shoot identical arrows.

Long Bow: The 1.4 to 1.7 m bow of Robin Hood fame.

Composite Bow: Same size as a short bow, made of wood laminated between strips of horn or sinew for added power.

Light Crossbow: A bow mounted at right angles to a stock, with a mechanism to hold and realease the string. Both types of crossbows use shorter projectiles (bolts(. BNolts may not be shot from Bows. Projectiles are not interchangeable.

Heavy Crossbow: A larger, more powerful crossbow.

Arquebus: A crude firearm, set off by a glowing match held in the hand.

Matchlock Musket: A heavier version of the arquebus, set off by a match in a trigger-operated clamp

Wheellock Pistol: A crude pistol set off by a complex and fragile trigger-operated sparking mechanism.

Flintlock Smoothbore Pistol: A pistol set off by an improved sparking mechanism, and with an unrifled barrel.

Flintlock Musket: A shoulder-fired weapon set off by a flintlock.

Flintlock Rifle and Rifled Pistol; Identical to the flintlock musket and smoothbore pistol, but with the addition of spiral grooves inside the barrel for increased accuracy.

Percussion Rifle and Pistol: Identical to the rifled versions (sometimes multi-shot versions are manufactured), but set off by percussion caps.

Archiac Missile Weapons, Table 1

		Range		
Weapon/tech level:	*Shots:*	*Eff. (8+):*	*long (10+):*	*Ext. (12+)*
Sling/1	1 stone	4 (1)	8 (0)	15 (0)
Short Bow/1	1 arrow	2.5 (1)	5 (0)	30 (0)
Long Bow/1	1 arrow	5 (2)	20 (1)	40 (0)
Comp. Bow/1	1 arrow	5 (2)	20 (1)	50 (0)
Lt Crossbow/1	1 bolt	5 (2)	10 (1)	30 (0)
Hy Crossbow/1	1 bolt	5 (3)	10 (2)	40 (0)
Arquebus/2	1 ball	2.5 (2)	8 (2)	25 (0)
WL Pistol/2	1 ball	1 (1)	2 (1)	5 (0)
ML Musket/2	1 ball	5 (3)	10 (2)	30 (0)
FL SB Pistol/3	1 ball	1 (1)	2 (1)	5 (0)
FL Musket/3	1 ball	5 (2)	15 (2)	30 (0)
FL Rifled Pistol/3	1 ball	1 (1)	2 (1)	5 (0)
FL Rifle	1 ball	20 (3)	40 (1)	60 (0)
Perc. Pistol/4	6 balls	2 (2)	3 (1)	6 (0)
Perc. Rifle/4	1 ball	20 (3)	40 (1)	80 (0)

Notes; Heavy crossbow and matchlock musket may only be fired in enemy fire phase and only if firing soldier is stationary. Same for flintlock rifle. No weapon listed may achieve multiple hits on a stand. All bows and slings have a signature DM of 0, all others have a signature DM of +1.

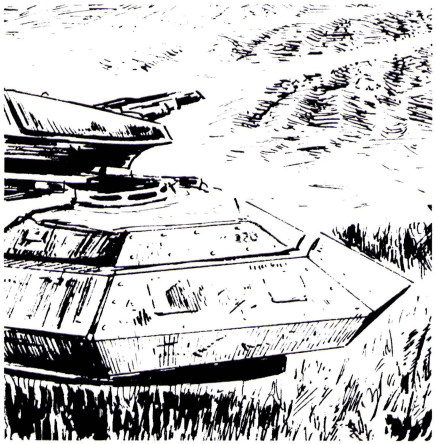
Archaic Missile Weapons, Table 2

	Data				
Weapon:	*Weight(gm):*	*Price(Cr):*	*Targets:*	*Dex. Mods:*	
Sling	0 (100)	1 (0)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)
Short Bow	500 (100)	15 (.1)	1	5 (-2)	10 (+2)†
Long Bow	1000 (300)	30 (.1)	1	7 (-2)	11 (+2)†
Composite Bow	1000 (150)	100 (.1)	1	8 (-2)	11 (+2)†
Lt Crossbow	3000 (100)	45 (.1)	1	4 (-2)	9 (+1)†
Hy Crossbow	9000 (100)	65 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	11 (+1)†
Arquebus	5000 (25)	50 (.5)	1	6 (-2)	11 (+1)
WL Pistol	1500 (20)	300 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)
ML Musket	9000 (30)	100 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	11 (+1)
FL SB Pistol	900 (20)	40 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)
FL Musket	6000 (30)	60 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)
FL Rifled Pistol	1250 (20)	150 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)
FL Rifle	7000 (30)	100 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)
Perc. Pistol	1250 (20)	150 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)
Perc. Rifle	6000 (30)	100 (.1)	1	6 (-2)	10 (+1)

Notes: Weight in parenthesis is that of a single round of ammunition. Cost in parenthesis is that of a single unit of ammunition. Weapons noted with a † have the DM required to both dexterity and strength. Ammunition for slings usually consists of small stones, which can be found almost anywhere, and have no cost.

Abbreviations: WL = wheellock, ML = matchlock, FL = flintlock, SB = smoothbore, Perc. = percussion, Lt = light, Hy = heavy, Eff. = effective, Ext. = extreme.

— Frank Chadwick



Soft Bunk: Or What To Do When The Zhodani Attack

Player's Information:

Tionale (Vilis 0701-c674321-8) is a non-industrial world outside the sphere of direct Imperial influence, although it is considered to be an Imperial client state.

The world's tainted atmosphere and lack of any readily exploited resources caused it to be settled relatively recently compared to its neighbors.

Settlement still clusters around the single starport on the world, but a slowly expanding belt of farms and small settlements surrounds the port city. The world's extensive outback is inhabited by a little studied alien race which until recently was peaceful, but of late has become increasingly hostile to the human inhabitants of Tionale. Attacks on outlying farmsteads have occurred with increasing frequency over the last few months, and the area has been posted as an amber travel zone.

The players' group is contacted by a representative of the ruling council on Tionale, with a job offer. The council seeks a small band of mercenaries to serve as a training cadre for a newly raised and equipped citizen militia, to counter the threat posed by the hostiles, and protect the growing colony. The council will pay twice standard salaries and transport charges to Tionale to any mercenary group willing to undertake the ticket.

Referee's Information:

The human population of Tionale is roughly 8800, including technicians and starport personnel. Only a little over 400 citizens can be spared for training in the militia overall, and no more than 200 of these will be available at one time. Local manufacture of arms is practically nil, but sufficient equipment has been purchased off-planet to outfit the militia to tech level 6 standards. The group's first task when they arrive is to take 200 members of the militia out and begin small arms familiarization.

Approximately two weeks after the group arrives on planet, the Zhodani will invade Tionale. A small naval force will enter orbit around the world, achieving complete surprise, and meeting little resistance from the populace. After determining that there are no Imperial forces on the world, the fleet will move on, leaving a small occupation and pacification force. The council will issue one last order to the militia, to act as a guerrilla force, and make life as difficult as possible for the Zhodani army of occupation.

Amber Zone

Most of the militia's supplies and equipment were captured during the landing. The militia has small arms (rifles, submachine guns, and a few machine-guns) plus whatever equipment the mercenary unit had with it. Ammunition will be in short supply.

The Zhodani garrison on Tionale consists of a battalion-sized task force of Zhodani colonial troops from the planet Querion. Due to Querion's low tech level (9) their troops are used exclusively as garrisons on primitive worlds such as Tionale.

The Querion garrison battalion consists of picked troops armed with the best equipment available to that world. Specific elements of the unit are drawn from seven different parent regiments and brigades, and although the unit has a high esprit de corps, inter-unit rivalry makes cooperation difficult.

The battalion contains the following units:

Two infantry companies, each of three platoons. Each infantry platoon has 41 men, five wheeled APCs (armed with tac missiles and auto-cannon), about twenty disposable anti-tank rocket launchers (ATRL), and five laser rifles. The infantry are armed with assault rifles and flak jackets.

One artillery company, of two batteries. Each battery contains three self-propelled multiple rocket launchers (MRLs).

One engineering platoon of about forty men, and demolitions equipment.

One lift cavalry platoon of two grav tanks (armed with lasers and auto-cannon) and two grav APCs (armed with tac missiles and auto-cannon).

One transport squad, with five unarmed and unarmored G/carriers (enough to lift one platoon of infantry and their equipment).

A military government platoon of forty men.

A military police platoon of forty men, armed with assault rifles, flak jackets and various riot control gases.

The exact nature of the indigenous alien race and their position in this situation must be determined by the referee. They could be hostile to both sides, or side with the colonists or the Zhodani. A lot could depend upon the initial actions of the players and those of the Zhodani towards the aliens.

The referee must devise a map of the surface of Tionale and whatever other details of the planet are needed.

The referee should keep in mind that Zhodani high officers are psionic, and spies among the city's population will quickly be apprehended.

— Loren Wiseman

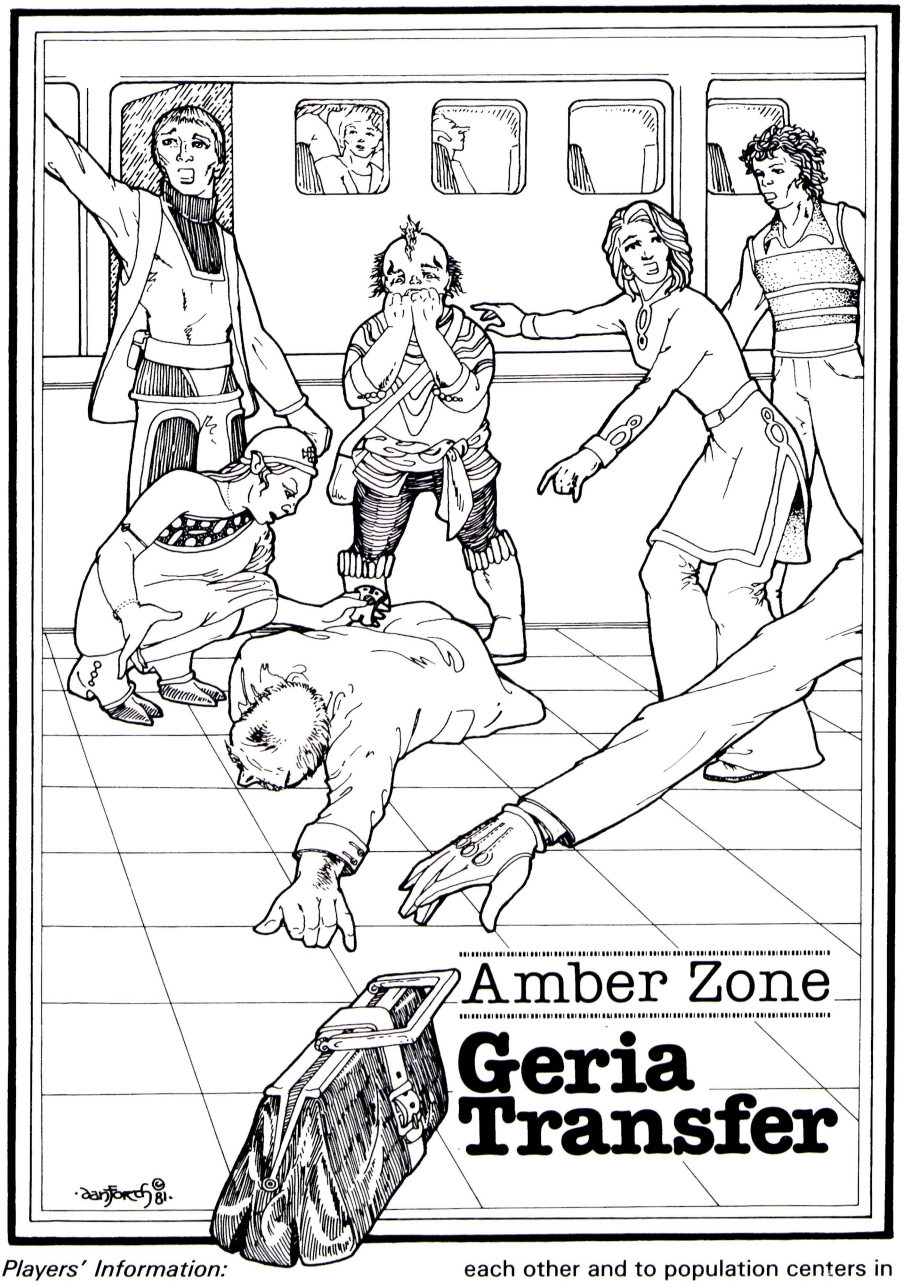
continued from page 20

it is to any player character. However, the referee can and should continue to make rolls on the reaction table for all NPCs, making it look as if random chance governs everything. It's a convenient excuse, if nothing else, to say that the dice were behind the actions of a particularly ruthless non-player character!

By keeping these precepts in mind, it should be possible for NPCs to become a much more viable part of any referee's **Traveller** games or campaigns. By providing motives, directions, and intentions to the NPC, the adventure can go off on tangents that the players never would have thought possible or desirable. The new options can ewven surprise the referee, who can often let the NPC lead the way into a new adventure without a lot of contrivance or effort.

So set out into the world in the company of your players, joining into your own game as an NPC. When you've had to play one or two (or even more) different parts, you'll realize how useful these extensions of your persona can be. Just one word of warning, though; don't get too attached to your non-player character. The less sociable players will often tend to kill them off for fun and profit, and getting killed can ruin your whole day.

— J. Andrew Keith



Players' Information:

Cyris (Pesek 0501 B-769653-A) is a quiet, pastoral world that achieves a high personal income level from specialized light industry. There is only one continent, mostly savanna, 4,000 km across, with class B starports on the east and west coasts. These are connected to each other and to population centers in the interior by a high speed rail network (HSR).

The party, in Cyris Westcenter a few kilometers from the spaceport, is approached by a services factor. The factor, representing an unnamed interest, is impatient and worried; the mission she

offers is urgent.

She explains that a courier, carrying a valuable industrial sample, was to transfer it offworld from Cyris Wesport this afternoon. A change in her client's plans makes it necessary for the courier to be recalled, and the sample returned to the factor. However, a freak electrical storm has suddenly closed the port to all space and air traffic (it remains open for ground transport and servicing). The courier, who cannot be contacted normally, will undoubtedly go undercover possibly travelling to Cyris Easport, which is open (the trip is 4,000 km, which will take about 8 hours by HSR). The party is instructed to intercept the courier, who will be carefully described to them, and return the sample case to the factor. Payment on delivery of the case will be Cr20,000 for each member of the team, up to a maximum of Cr100,000.

Referee's Information:

If the players ask what "intercept" means, they will be irritatedly told that it means using whatever force is necessary; the courier is a free-lancer who will not trust anyone but his final contact.

The party will spot the courier across the massport concourse, headed for an HSR platform. Before he can be contacted, however, a person will brush him, and he will collapse with an apparent heart attack. In the resulting confusion, another person will attempt to steal the satchel, and will succeed unless the players intervene. All attempts to revive the courier will fail, regardless of medical skill available.

If the players get possession of the satchel (which is black and resembles a doctor's bag) and open it (which they will) they will find it contains an envelope filled with photos and computer printouts, and three glass tubes, filled with green liquid, in a protective holder riveted to the inside of the bag. The tubes will be recognized as microbial cultures; they bear the trademark of Gene Engineering Research and Industrial Applications Corporation (GERIA), a small genetics lab located on one of Cyris' off-continental islands.

The papers document the culture as Sabel 6-G, an organic coating for metals that stops corrosion — obviously of great industrial value. The computer program for creating Sabel 6-G is not present, but (if the team even thinks to check) only computer-4 or better will know this certainly. The envelope is chemically treated to burn furiously if ignited, totally destroying the contents.

In the bottom of the bag is a black body pistol, loaded. It is ordinary except for the well-known fact that couriers never carry guns.

Calling up the stock exchange profile of GERIA will disclose that the company is on the brink of bankruptcy. The company offices will decline all calls, but will ask where the caller may be located.

The dead man is not a courier (surprise!) but is a GERIA scientist, who stole the satchel's contents to sell privately. The two men at the port (the killer and the bagman) are GERIA security staff, attempting to recover company property. While GERIA still has the synthesis programs, it will take at least four weeks to synthesize more 6-G, by which time they may no longer exist as a company.

This is exactly the goal of the factor's client, who is Kjeldahl Metallfabrik SA (not located on Cyris). The team originally hired by the factor — expert professionals — were prevented from landing by the storm, and the factor had to grab the first likely replacements before the scientist could escape.

Kjeldahl wants the 6-G culture for obvious reasons. They also know, however, that if GERIA collapses financially,

Kjeldahl will be able to buy it up lock, stock, and synthesis program. Therefore, if the culture is destroyed, the team will still be paid by the factor (though to insure their best efforts she will not tell them this).

If the security man steals the bag, he will rejoin his partner in a groundcar outside the terminal building. Both are armed with automatic pistols, and wear cloth armor under their topcoats. The car also contains a carbine and a shotgun.

If the team gets the satchel, they may return it to the factor (pursued by the GERIA men) or attempt to steal it for themselves (pursued by everyone). They may hide in the massport or the city, take the train or steal an aircraft — very dangerous in the storm, which will last another 48 hours before lifting suddenly, allowing the factor's first team to land.

If a buyer can be located — possibly including Kjeldahl SA — the cultures and documents together will be worth at least Cr500,000. They will have a hard time selling the cultures undocumented, and the papers alone will be worthless. (A synthesis program can, in time, be worked out from two tubes of live culture.)

Finally: Only two tubes were stolen from GERIA, a fact only the company and the dead man know. The third tube is an aerosol germ bomb prepared as "insurance" by the renegade scientist. If it is removed from the holder, or broken open, it will be triggered, with lethal effects for everyone within 20 meters and not wearing at least a respirator. Demolitions skill may spot the bomb trigger on close inspection. The bomb isn't explosive and won't damage the other tubes.

The transfer can be quick, easy money if the players are honest, and can become a planet-wide manhunt as easily — especially if the bomb goes off in a crowded massport.

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continued from page 16

ficulty (except for humidity, as noted above). Newt style tools and weapons may be purchased at normal prices, but must be specified as such at purchase. Availability of these items is up to the referee.

Psionics are rare (DM −3 in addition to all others) but not unknown. Psionic talents are suppressed in Newts, as in the rest of the Imperial population.

Playing Newts: Players who wish to be Newts should bear in mind that there are certain activities from which they are prohibited. Newts will not lie (although they may withhold the truth if protocol requires it). Newts will not break the law unless by doing so they can restore the balance of the universe. Newts will not obey orders which are disruptive, in their view. Disorder and disorganization make them nervous and they will have a very difficult time resisting the urge to order and organize their surroundings.

Players who have no experience dealing with Newts have a DM of −3 on the reaction table whenever encountering one. The referee may wish to allow reductions of this DM for knowledge of Newt rituals. Players may gain knowledge of Newt ways by study in a library, or by association with Newts. Referees should make learning the more advanced rituals more tedious, of course. To learn the proper method of greeting may take several weeks; to be able to deal with an official quickly may take a month or two; to learn the details of trial procedure, or of contract negotiation will take months or years.

Military: Newt military forces are usually restricted to the defense of their homeworlds. Newts are occasionally found in mercenary units, but are usually segregated from other races because of the logistical problems involved.

— Loren K. Wiseman and William H. Keith, Jr.

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